My Everything

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/27425887.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warnings:	Major Character Death, Underage
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham's Father
Additional Tags:	Post-Fall (Hannibal), Post-Season/Series 03 AU, Time Travel Fix-It, Angst and Hurt/Comfort, Fluff, Hannibal Lecter Loves Will Graham, Will Graham Loves Hannibal Lecter, Young Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter is Whipped, Protective Hannibal Lecter, Caring Hannibal Lecter, Epic Love, Tender Sex, Includes a sexual relationship between a minor and an adult, Hannibal is in his twenties (sort of), Copius amounts of lube, Show characters referred to, Original characters get a few lines, Introspection, Discussion of attempted sexual assault, Will turns eighteen, Hannibal Lecter Worships Will Graham, Sex Toys, True Love, Hannibal chooses not to be a serial killer cannibal, Will is 23 by the end of My Everything, Love
Language:	English
Series:	Part 2 of For you, for us, our life.
Collections:	Fanfics to read and reread
Stats:	Published: 2020-11-07 Completed: 2021-01-02 Words: 66,752 Chapters: 10/10

My Everything

by Celinesits

Summary

COMPLETE
After the fall, Will Graham dies. Hannibal Lecter, mad with grief, ends his life but wakes to find himself back in time. The 1990s.
His Will (part one) establishes the start of his relationship with Will and My Everything (part two) are snapshots of their lives together over the next few years.
I DO THINK you need to read Part One (His Will) BEFORE Part two to make sense, but up to you, dear reader.
Please read all tags and warnings.
Thank you to everyone who has read and supported this story. Thank you! It means a lot. x

Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

‘Tell me, Will, what are you chewing so vigorously that requires such concentration?’ Hannibal asked.

Will was making the most extraordinary faces.

‘I’m chewing…’ Will mumbled. ‘Strawberry laces with gummi’s, and pop rocks…’ He made another face, wiggling his tongue inside his mouth. ‘And it's stuck.’

Hannibal raised a brow. ‘Sounds like you need to go and brush your teeth.’

Will chewed some more and sauntered over to where Hannibal sat. Kneeling on the sofa, he opened his mouth near Hannibal’s ear. The pop-rock fizzed and hissed, and Will gurgled with laughter as Hannibal drew further back into the couch.

Will’s palate as an American teenager was still surprising to Hannibal. True, he had been sixteen aeons ago, but his sweets had been petit-fours and macaroons, not a constant orgy of artificially induced sugary nightmares. Will also lived on a diet of nuggets, burgers and pizza when he was at home and Hannibal had to adapt his menu, serving healthier versions of what Will liked whilst still introducing him to new foods.

‘We’re going to have dinner soon, and this is what you wanted as a snack?’

Will smirked and pressed up against Hannibal, giving him a noisy open-mouthed kiss, the pop-rocks still bubbling away. ‘Want me to squirt some cream into your mouth?’

Hannibal grimaced, eyeing the cream canister on the coffee table. They had gone food shopping after Will came back from school. Hannibal, choosing fresh produce whilst Will had picked up a few choice items from the confectionary aisle.

He returned Will’s sweet kiss, sliding his lips down Will’s jaw. ‘There are better creams I prefer squirted into my mouth.’

Will gave a wolfish grin. ‘You being sexy, darlin?’

‘Possibly,’ Hannibal murmured as Will sat astride his lap.

‘I wish you would let me taste your cream as it squirts into my mouth,’ he said seductively, and Hannibal felt a jolt of arousal.

‘Yes, well, when you’ re—’

‘Eighteen!’ Will said loudly, eyes looking up towards the ceiling in an exaggerated manner. ‘Yes, how old?’ He cocked a hand around his ear. ‘How old? Eighteen, did you say?’

Will tickled his waist. ‘You better be ready for me when I turn eighteen is all I’m saying.’ He shook his head, grinning. ‘Better clear your schedule, cos sugar, I ain't letting you outta bed for a week.’ He waggled his brows. ‘You gonna be ready?’ His charming face looked heartfelt and cheeky at the same time. Blue eyes bright.

Hannibal nodded, laying small kisses on Will’s mouth. ‘Yes, I will be ready. My diary will eagerly be awaiting for that page to turn.’

Will finally defeating the pop rocks, gave Hannibal another sugary kiss with tongue.

They shared a few minutes of deep, unhurried kisses, as Will slipped his arms around Hannibal's back, running them up and down. Hannibal tenderly cupped Will’s jaw, his fingers pressing through the soft hair behind his neck.

Will sighed, leaning back, arms resting on Hannibal's shoulders, forehead and nose pressed together.

‘I love you,’ Will whispered.

‘Thank you.’ Words too inadequate to equate what he felt for this beautiful boy.

‘Do you think anyone in the world is in love like us?’ Will’s fingertips grazed Hannibal’s temple, sweeping down his cheek as if memorising the structure of his face.

Hannibal stroked the sides of Will’s neck, his breath fluttering against the pink lips. ‘No darling, I don’t think there is anyone in this world in love like us.’

He kissed Will’s forehead and pressed their cheeks together.

Heart trembling, quivering with affection, he squeezed his eyes closed. He was utterly obsessed with Will. Tried to suppress it outwardly sometimes, worried that he would appear suffocating. But inside he was an emotional wreck. Living with a knot of fear that reminded him how fragile and transient life was.

Hannibal used to take pride in being private, a mysterious persona that gave away only what he wanted. His ‘person suit’ ready for everyone to see but not look beneath. A serial killer cannibal. Revelled in it, took pleasure in it. Fooling those around him. Death surrounding him and remaining unmoved. Armoured walls around his heart, a fortress so high that no one peered or pierced through it.

Until *Will Graham*.

Crotchety, prickly *Will Graham* somehow had climbed over. He was fascinating and Hannibal curious and intrigued to learn how close *Will* was to discovering the truth about his secret identity. Called him a friend without meaning it, or did he? Hannibal devising a plan to protect himself, *Will*, collateral damage and needing to be punished for being clever. But it hadn’t been satisfying, so Hannibal tried a different tactic. Embrace *Will* as a true friend. Let him in as he was the only one worthy of being a friend. In turn, he could push *Will*. Push him until he had no choice but to embrace his darkness. *“No one can be fully aware of another*

human being unless we love them. By that love, we see potential in our beloved. Through that love, we allow our beloved to see their potential. Expressing that love, our beloved's potential comes true. I love you, Will."

Hannibal hadn't realised the depth of his feeling for *Will* until he betrayed their friendship. But Hannibal forgave him, though ensuring *Will* be punished severely with deadly consequences, otherwise, how would he learn?

He hadn't realised how much he would miss *Will* and accepting that he had fallen in love somehow at some point was mystifying; that he could fall prey to such emotions. Be vulnerable and open to another only to be betrayed again, as *Will* couldn't help himself, always doing the 'right thing', with no sense of self-preservation at all, resulting in Hannibal punishing him again. He couldn't honestly say that he wouldn't have done irreparable damage to *Will* that day or even killed him, but he would have regretted it, in his obsession in consuming *Will*.

He had said to Alana that he would save *Will* for her, but he wanted to save *Will* for himself. When *Will* closed the door on their friendship, it forced him to acknowledge the lengths he would go to have the last word; get under *Will's* skin. He couldn't abide anyone else taking his life or freedom, but it was acceptable if he did it himself. *"You wouldn't have turned yourself in unless I rejected you."*

Confined to his basement cell had been worth it when *Will* returned. Hannibal knew he would eventually. Of course, he had to remove *Will's* new family, the first chance he got. *"You don't want me to have anything in my life that's not you."*

And for one beautiful moment, *Will* had accepted them, but the truth had been so terrible for him that he preferred to push them into oblivion and to die. *"Without death, we'd be at a loss. It's the prospect of death that drives us to greatness."*

The feeling of holding the dead body of someone who could have been your …was catastrophic. Suicide had not been the enemy, living without *Will* was.

Now Hannibal held his Will, the most beautiful of souls; sweet, kind, gentle, funny Will. The desire to know where Will was always, be able to see him, touch him. He had never been so openly affectionate in his entire life. With all walls crumbled, he was now raw and exposed, holding Will close. Shelter him, love him, protect him, look after him; a constant, always.

Always.

He did not know if that was sustainable, but it was all he had.

Ring Ring Ring Ring.

His eyes flicked open.

He twisted slightly, reaching out to grab the phone from the end table.

‘Hello?’ he said as Will pressed a closed mouth on his cheek, and he wrinkled his nose in affection.

‘Hello, Dr Lecter, Hannibal. Will’s dad here.’

Hannibal tilted back from Will’s head slightly. ‘Hannibal, please, Mr Graham…’ Will’s eyes opened wide as he crowded forward trying to listen in to the earpiece. ‘Good afternoon, what can I do for you?’

‘Hannibal, yes, hello. I umm had something I wanted to talk to you about.’

Will’s eyebrows shot up as Hannibal gave a slight shrug.

‘Of course,’ Hannibal said smoothly. The man hardly ever rang.

Will frowned, butting his head against Hannibal, causing his chest to rumble in silent laughter. ‘Stop,’ he mouthed to Will.

Will’s father hesitated. Hannibal was intrigued. He wasn't worried that somebody had discovered their relationship; they were both excellent actors. It must be something else.

‘Err well, I’ve had an opportunity come by, and I wanted to talk to you about it...’

‘Of course,’ Hannibal repeated. His hand out, palm upwards as Will mouthed, ‘what?’

‘I’ve been asked to do a job out of state…’

‘Okay,’ Hannibal said slowly as Will’s eyes darted in alarm.

‘How can I be of assistance?’ Hannibal tried to sound as friendly as possible.

‘Well, it's about Will…’

‘Yes,’ Hannibal said meeting Will’s eyes, who squirmed on his lap anxiously.

‘I need to give them an answer tomorrow. And, well, I know what a big favour it would be…’ Will’s mouth opened in a large O. ‘And I feel bad for even asking, and it’s fine if you can’t as...it would be, what’s the word… an imposition.’

‘Not at all, Mr Graham. Please go ahead and ask.’

A pause and then a quick flurry of words. ‘I’ve been offered a job on a shipping oil rig for two and a half months. They need diesel engineers, and it’s good money, but obviously, Will can’t come with me—’

‘And you wonder if he can stay here with me?’ Hannibal filled in.

Will’s hands flew to his face, grasping his cheeks, looking stunned.

‘Well, when you say it like that, its sounds—’

‘Mr Graham Will is most welcome to stay with me for as long as you need. If the job is worthwhile, I am only happy to help out. Honestly.’ He was about to say, nothing would make him happier but thought it might be overkill.

‘Really? I wouldn’t ask, but I don’t have anyone else, and I know how much Will likes spending time with you and you're so good with him. He would be no trouble. He's a good kid. And he can sleep anywhere, on the sofa—’

‘I have a spare room, Mr Graham.’

Will was mouthing, ‘oh my god, oh my god, oh my god,’ as Hannibal tried not to laugh.

‘It’s fine. It would not be an inconvenience at all.’

‘That’s swell, Hannibal. I can’t thank you enough. Obviously, I’d have to talk to Will about it first.’

‘Why don’t you come for dinner tonight. We can speak more in detail. About six-thirty? I’m making brisket.’

‘Thank you, Hannibal. That sounds great. I’ll, yes, see you then. Let Will know.’

‘Of course,’ Hannibal said.

‘Goodbye.’

‘Goodbye.’ Hannibal put the phone down as Will bounced off his knees.

‘Oh my GOD!!’ Will cried out. ‘I’m gonna be living with my boyfriend for two and a half months. Oh my god!’

He looked ecstatic. ‘Oh yeah, oh yeah, oh yeah,’ he sang doing a combination of the running man and a clenched fist dance around the room. He ended with a finger running down the keys of the grand piano by the bay windows.

Hannibal watched him with a tender smile. He looked so happy and he imagined that *Will,* most likely, hadn’t experienced many moments like this. Pure joy. Unfettered happiness. His heart pinched.

He could never know what kind of relationship *Will* would have wanted, had the bloodshed and carnage not been the constant of their relationship. But *Will* was utterly different from his Will. Childhood experiences shaping their future and both paths diverged the moment Hannibal had stepped into their world.

He stood up, and Will launched himself at him, arms looping around his neck, legs wrapping around his waist, mouth kissed ravenously. Hannibal gripped back fiercely.

Minutes passed in a make-out frenzy and eventually Hannibal, still carrying Will, went into the kitchen, depositing Will on the counter.

‘My love, I need to check the oven.’

‘Mmm.’ Will pawed at his shirt, pulling him back for a lingering kiss. ‘Two and a half months, Hannibal! I’m gonna be naked for a lot of that, just so you know.’ He gave a suggestive smirk, clasping Hannibal's hand and kissing it.

‘Who knew that Will Graham was such a sexual being.’ Hannibal pressed another kiss on Will’s lips. ‘You're insatiable.’

‘It’s your fault,’ Will said breathlessly, as Hannibal nuzzled his neck. ‘I think about sex all day.’

Hannibal nipped his throat lightly. ‘Well, you're an excellent multi-tasker in that case. Your grades are outstanding.’

Six-thirty, Will’s father appeared at the doorstep. By then, they had straightened their clothes, and Will was setting the table as Hannibal opened the door.

There was lots of polite conversation. Can’t believe I haven’t had you for dinner? I apologise. Oh, no, not at all. You already do so much. And so, it went on. The brisket was succulent and falling off the bone, and the rolls were soft and fluffy, the potatoes creamy.

After dinner, Will’s father asked if he could speak to Hannibal alone for a few minutes and Will pretended to go into the back yard, though Hannibal knew he was listening in the corridor.

Will’s father asked if Hannibal would be Will’s named guardian while he was away on the oil rig. He would only have phone access once a week and needed to appoint an adult for Will, or he wouldn’t be able to go.

Hannibal said he would be honoured and happy to fulfil that role. Once again, Will’s father referred to him as Will’s ‘big brother’, and Hannibal responded with, ‘Will and I are good friends.’

Will’s father gave an easy smile, looking relaxed and relieved. He had stopped drinking in the last few years and only had beer on special occasions. The house was cleaner, and he seemed happier within himself, more confident, which opened opportunities like this one.

The next weekend was spent in a flurry of shopping activity. Hannibal insisted Will pick a colour scheme for the spare room, ‘his’ room.

‘Why do I need my own room?’ Will looked puzzled as they drove to the carpet store. ‘I’ll be sleeping in your room anyway.’

‘Will, it would be good for you to have your own space and a desk for your schoolwork and items. Also, please imagine the look on your father’s face if I say, “Mr Graham, it’s fine. Just put Will’s suitcase in my room, he’ll be sharing my bed”.’

Will made a face. ‘Fine.’

Once Will had picked colours, Hannibal went ahead to decorate Will's 'room'. He took great pleasure in buying items, sparing no expense but ensuring it looked comfortable and not too over the top. He didn't want to spook Will's father.

The happy moment loomed closer, and Will could barely hold his excitement. He was fizzing like a can of coke. Hannibal told him not to look so happy around his father, and Will scoffed.

'I know! I'm just the right level with, "good on ya, daddy", and "I'll be a good boy for Hannibal, don't worry".' He gave a charming smile which Hannibal licked.

The night before Will's father was due to leave, he dropped Will in his pickup truck with a suitcase and a bin bag full of textbooks. Will jumped out with his backpack and sports kit spilling from an unzipped bag.

Hannibal showed Will's father the spare room, where Will would be 'sleeping'. The spare room was down the corridor from Hannibal's room with its own en suite. He needed to reassure Will's father that Will would have his own space and be looked after.

'Hannibal, this is great. So nice of you. I don't know what to say…'

'It's fine.' Hannibal filled in. 'It was good to have an excuse to do up the spare room or I might not have got round to it.'

'Well, thank you.' They traipsed back downstairs. 'I've got an early start so…' Will's father looked down at his son and gave him a quick hug. Hannibal stepped away into the kitchen, providing them with a moment alone before coming to say goodbye. Will's father gave him an awkward pat on the back. 'Thank you again, Hannibal.'

'Not at all.'

'I'll ring in a few days before I go ashore.' They shook hands and Hannibal and Will stood on the porch as he pulled away, waving as the truck lights disappeared down the road.

Once the front door closed, Will tugged Hannibal close, nosing his neck, a tongue peeking out, tasting his skin. 'Can we go upstairs?'

Stretched out in bed, Will laid on Hannibal as they kissed, softly touching each other, gazing at one another, losing track of time.

A week into I'm-living-with-my-boyfriend, Will was playing on the video console when Hannibal returned home from work.

'Hello,' Hannibal smiled, dropping a kiss on his head.

'Hiya,' Will replied.

'What's this?' Hannibal asked, seeing a slip of paper on the coffee table.

‘Parent-teacher conference,’ Will said, pausing the game and catching Hannibal’s face to give a proper kiss. ‘We have them twice a year. Dad manages to go to at least one. You don't have to go, but I have to take it back with your whatever tick and signature.’

‘Of course, I’ll go,’ Hannibal said, reading it. He sat down next to Will on the sofa, putting an arm around him.

‘Yeah?’ Will returned his focus to the tv screen. ‘It’s really boring, and it will be only old people, parents.’

‘Will, it's fine. I’d like to go if you are comfortable with that. I want to hear them raving about how remarkable you are.’ He kissed Will’s cheek.

Will grinned. ‘Hannibal, you're the only one who says stuff like that. My heads so heavy with your praises, I don’t know how I get out of bed in the mornings.’

‘All my praises are valid, Will. I don’t glorify your achievements to inflate your ego needlessly. You deserve them.’

‘I know you think that.’ Will switched off the game, putting down the control. He snuggled against Hannibal; his legs tucked under on the sofa. ‘Just don’t expect anyone else to think I catch stars in my spare time is all. Especially my gym teacher. I hate group activities.’

‘Do you not think you are outstanding?’

Will shrugged, playing with the buttons on Hannibal’s shirt. ‘I know I'm good at school but so are a bunch of other kids.’

‘You are the most extraordinary, the cleverest, wonderful…’ Hannibal pulled him half over his lap, as he leant down, dotting kisses across Will’s face. Will’s face scrunched in delight. ‘You can do anything, my love—anything you want. You are brilliant. Don’t ever forget that.’

On the afternoon of the parent-teacher conference, Will came to the hospital straight from school so they could go together.

Hannibal’s secretary buzzed him on speakerphone. ‘Dr Lecter Will is here. He said he would wait next door.’ He was finishing a consult, and his professional exterior broke as he smiled.

‘Can you get Will a snack and tell him I’ll be with him in twenty minutes.’

‘Yes, Dr Lecter.’

As they drove, Will told him he looked like one of those men from fashion magazines he flicked through at the dentist and to be prepared for lots of stares. Will stayed in the cafeteria with his classmates whilst Hannibal visited his form room. As Will had predicted, he was met with appraising looks from female staff members and mothers. The men gave him side-eyed frowns. As always, Hannibal was charming and attentive. Making polite conversation. Oh, you're a doctor. So young to be a doctor. So nice, you're so close to Grahams. Will is such a good boy. So good of you to come.

By now, he had adapted to being in his twenties again, and looked out of place with all the other parents, but he was interested in Will's wellbeing and education. He was immensely pleased to hear the teachers praise Will. His report was glowing, with a high-grade point average, which wasn't surprising. Will regularly got A's on his homework.

Hannibal benevolently graced the desk of the gym teacher who said that Will was good at running but should be encouraged at group sports. Hannibal felt his fingers itch under the table, imagining pulling back the teacher's arm until it broke.

Will grinned an I-told-you so when they drove back home.

'Ask me for anything, you deserve a present,' Hannibal said as they walked into the house.

'Anything?' Will asked.

Hannibal was thinking of a car...Will would be too polite to ask, but Hannibal could insist.

'Can we please have sex?' Will looked hopeful. 'I want to make love to you.' Looking suddenly shy and hesitant, in case Hannibal would say no. 'I know it's not my birthday, and I won't touch you there, but you just said I could ask for anything, and deserve a present—'

Hannibal held his hands in his, thumb caressing the edges. His heart twisted in affection at Will's earnest negotiating skills. 'It's not that I don't want you to touch me, darling. But some things can wait.' He still insisted Will be eighteen for the next stage in their relationship.

Will looked uncertain, eyes now forest green and Hannibal tipped his chin up with a doting smile. Heart skipping a beat. 'But if you want to, yes. I would love you to make love to me.'

He was rewarded with a relieved, bright smile, and a resounding, 'yes.'

Sweeping Will up in a fireman's lift, he carried him upstairs, Will laughing in surprise. Will was still a few inches shorter than Hannibal, and a lot lighter, but Hannibal knew he would be nearly as tall as him. Just a shade shorter, but with his slight frame, he would look delicate. Doe-eyed, long-lashed, with curls tumbling around his face. Beautiful.

Hannibal gently put him down by the bed, and Will ran his fingers up his chest, running a tongue over his lower lip. Hannibal felt himself sink, hypnotised by Will's eyes.

'Can I undress you?' he asked.

'Yes,' Hannibal said.

Will slowly undid his tie, sliding it off, unbuttoning his shirt, while still holding his gaze. Undoing his belt, the clasp on his trousers, pulling down the zip. Hannibal shivered as his shirt fell on the floor. He stepped out of his shoes, quickly divesting his trousers and socks until he stood in his boxers.

Will looked serious as his warm hands carefully traced the shape of Hannibal's chest, his nipples. Hannibal moaned, trying to stand still, as Will fingered the waistband of his boxers and started to edge them down.

Once he was naked, Hannibal could feel his legs shake; he didn't know how long he could stand up unsupported.

'Will,' his voice was husky. 'I'm not going to last. We need to get on the bed love.'

Hannibal bit down a whimper. He was so hard, he was afraid with one touch he would climax, and they hadn't even done anything yet. Will wanting to have sex with him was enough to dissolve his brain. Any way Will touched him ran currents of pleasure up and down his body.

Nodding, Will quickly shed his clothes and scampered on the bed. He rummaged in the bedside cabinet, taking out the lube, and handed it to him.

Hannibal laid on his back and parted his legs as Will swallowed visibly. He coated his fingers in lube and started edging them inside himself. Will watching transfixed, leaned forward, kissing Hannibal's neck, sliding lips further down, licking over each nipple, sucking gently.

Hannibal closed his eyes, giving in to the range of sensations. Will kissing his body, Will hard against him. He was about to lose his mind.

'Will,' Hannibal groaned. He was so close. 'Amore mio. I need you.' He took his fingers out, giving control to Will.

Understanding, Will slicked himself quickly and holding Hannibal's thighs lightly in place, he got in position and pressed in.

The feel of Will inside him was incredible. Hannibal held him, encouraging him to go deeper. In, in, in again. Until he was all the way in and they both groaned, Will's head dropping against Hannibal's neck for a moment.

He started to move, and Hannibal closed his eyes, breathing steadily, feeling every inch of Will.

'So good, darling. I love you.'

Moments passed, the slow waves of pleasure ricocheting through him. He opened his eyes and saw Will's eyes screwed up, biting his lip.

'What is it? What's wrong?'

'I want to…' Will pressed his lips tightly. 'Move faster and…' he was shaking with the effort of holding back.

'It's okay. Let go love. Go faster, harder. I want you to. You won't hurt me. It's fine. Let go, darling, let go.' He hooked one long leg around Will, pulling him in further, encouraging him with tender words. Will let out a grateful sigh and moved faster, in and out, his thrusts feeling deeper and bigger.

'Don't hold back,' Hannibal said, gripping him. 'Let go beautiful. Let go. That's it.'

The friction between their bodies snapped, and he shuddered, coming as Will rocked faster and faster, chasing his climax as it neared the edge. Will held Hannibal's thigh with one arm and braced himself with the other, looking down, his mouth panting. His lips raspberry pink, eyes emerald and glowing, cheeks flushed.

Was it possible to keep falling in love with the same person over and over again? Just when Hannibal thought Will had overcome him entirely, his heart expanded—making more room for it to be entirely filled again with Will.

Will cried out, his body trembling as he came, hot, wet inside, causing Hannibal to arch his neck back, blissed out, relishing every second. Wrapping his arms around Will's back, he felt weightless. Nothing else mattered but this. Will inside him, Will holding him. Will kissing him. Will everywhere all over him. If this was the state of him right now, he felt breathless for when Will became an even more confident lover. He would need to learn more self-control, so he didn't ruin their lovemaking.

Will had him undone.

Will puffed out a strangled breath and collapsed, laying his full weight on Hannibal, his head resting on his chest. Hannibal kissed his curls, hands running up and down, everywhere he could reach. Soothing him. Crooning words of endearments. He couldn't stop gushing. How good it felt. How beautiful he was.

Will moved, his hair tickling, lips pressing kisses downwards. His tongue seeking a hard nipple and Hannibal felt every touch as if it were heightened, his post-orgasmic sensitivity making him melt into a silver lake.

'Will?'

Will kissed over his heart and looked up.

'Are you happy? Us, together. This is what you want?'

'Hannibal? Seriously. Don't ask that ever again. I'm living the dream. I want you. I love you. I'm happy all the time.'

He stretched up to kiss Hannibal's lips.

'Yours,' he whispered.

'Mine,' Hannibal said back. 'Yours.'

'Mine.' Will cupped his face and kissed him, sealing their breath as one.

Chapter End Notes

I have written part two in its entirety so will do regular updates.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

> This chapter is NOT light and fluffy. It discusses attempted sexual assault. If you find that troublesome, please skip to the notes at the end and read Chapter 3.
> Thank you.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

On Saturday's, Hannibal dropped Will off to the rescue animal shelter where he volunteered, working from ten am to one pm during term time. Hannibal had taken him a year ago knowing he had a natural affinity for animals, especially dogs. Will had expressed a wish to have one, but his father always said no. They had previously moved around too much, and dogs were too much work and took up too much space.

However, Will was thrilled with his part-time job and gave animated reports of the day's adventures. Hannibal had every intention of getting Will a dog when they moved in together.

Having Will live with him, waking up with him, going to sleep with him; made him both yearn and feel guilty for wanting Will to be older; when this level of domesticity could become a permanent fixture.

Six weeks into Will staying with him, Hannibal was packing up, ready to leave when his secretary buzzed on speakerphone.

'Dr Lecter, there is an urgent phone call from Jordon Watkins High School.'

Hannibal's hand froze on his briefcase, casting an eye at the clock. It was three-fifteen, and Will should be leaving school…

'Yes, I'll take it, thank you.' He sat back down, feeling an unpleasant stirring, ears ringing.

'This is Hannibal Lecter.'

'Hello?' A female voice. 'Dr Lecter, this is the Principal at Jordon Watkins High School. You are listed as Will Graham's temporary guardian.'

'Yes, that is correct.' Hannibal's knuckles were white as he gripped the briefcase handle. *Calm down.*

'I'm sorry, but we need you to come to the school urgently. There's been an incident.'

Hannibal flipped through a montage of dark scenarios which his rational mind immediately shut down. If it were that kind of serious, it would be the hospital calling, and not the

Principal asking him to come to the school.

He tried to breathe, but his heart was racing, and he felt light-headed.

‘What incident? What….’ He couldn’t form words. ‘Will…’

‘Will is…’ she paused. ‘Fine.’ But her tone said otherwise.

‘Where is he?’

‘He’s here….’

Hannibal heard Will’s voice in the background. ‘I’m here…’ a shuffling noise. ‘Here, please give me the phone.’ A pause. ‘Hannibal?’ Will’s voice sounded young and frightened but clear.

‘Are you okay?’ Hannibal closed his eyes; he really couldn’t breathe. His hands were shaking.

‘Yes, I’m …fine.’ That tone again. He wasn’t fine. ‘But I need you to come to school. Right now. Please. Sorry.’

‘I’m coming.’ He tried to keep his voice steady but could hear the tremor fracturing it. Standing up quickly, he banged his knee hard on the desk.

‘Hannibal…’ Will said. ‘Drive carefully. I’m fine. Just breathe. I’m okay. Calm down.’

‘Okay.’ He replied, his soul ached with love at Will comforting him. ‘I’m on my way.’

He quickly grabbed his coat and keys, sweeping out of the office. He walked straight past his secretary’s desk and then turned back.

‘Please cancel all my appointments for the week and give my most urgent cases to Dr Odewo. Please give my apologies. I have a personal emergency to attend. I must go.’ He hurried away without waiting for an answer.

The adrenalin kicked in, and his body was vibrating with nervous tension. What was wrong? What had happened? Couldn’t be that bad, but it was bad. Why was it bad?

Flinging his coat and briefcase in the car, he started the engine. Will had told him to drive carefully. He’d been able to tell with so few words that Hannibal was panicking. There was a time when he used to be good in emergencies, practical, but now… he did not feel in control.

He tried to drive carefully, head buzzing. The school was only a short distance.

Breathe.

He felt dizzy and sick, and he couldn’t understand why… Will was fine. He’d heard his voice.

He pulled up in the car park as close to the entrance as he could. There were an ambulance and two police cars. His heart tumbled. Police officers were dotted by the entrance talking, and a few students were straggling in the distance. Had there been a school shooting? Stabbing? What had happened?

He practically ran into the school, going to the reception.

‘I’m here for Will Graham,’ he said.

The woman gave him a look, laden with inside knowledge, and averted her eyes quickly. ‘Oh, yes, this way.’ She hurried down the corridor, and Hannibal followed. Dread looming into every part of him.

She opened the door, and as soon as he stepped in, he saw a blur of Will hurtling towards him, arms wrapping around his waist, face pressed against his chest. Hannibal’s arms at once enfolded him, kissing the top of his head, hugging him tightly.

Breathe.

Calm down. He’s fine. A few beats passed, and he gently pushed Will back.

Blood.

‘My god…what.’ His eyes darted across Will. His white T-shirt was covered in blood. The heaviest stain of dark red by the neckline, dripped further down, across the chest. Will’s lower lip was bleeding, a red stain on his chin. Vivid, red marks on his upper arms…his wrists.

‘What, why…blood.’ He couldn’t speak. He was choking on concern loaded in horror. ‘Wha —'

‘It’s not my blood,’ Will said quietly.

‘What happened?’ Hannibal finally looked at the Principal, standing by her desk.

She gestured, ‘please take a—’

‘What happened?’ His face heated at once with eyes narrowed, teeth bared, rage slicing through his words. He led Will to a chair, urging him to sit down, and kept his hands on his shoulders. Will was pale and shaky, his eyes wide.

‘There was a serious incident and...’

Hannibal’s jaw clenched.

‘Will was attacked by another student.’

The hot-white fury was instant, and he snarled. ‘Which student?’ He could feel the beast within him rise, imagining breaking the Principal’s neck and hunting down the person who

dared to touch Will. He wouldn't make it elegant; he would rip the throat and crack the limbs apart. A bloodbath, evisceration… His fist clenched his body tense. He was ready to attack.

'Hannibal?' Will's voice again. Grounding him. Will reached up and squeezed his hand, and Hannibal thumped down in the empty chair next to him, swallowing the volcano that was threatening to explode.

This wasn't supposed to happen. Will could not be hurt.

His hand tightened on Will's shoulder, drawing him close and Will gave him an anxious look.

'Which student?' He repeated, trying to control his tone. 'Where are they?'

'The ambulance took them. Their injury was quite severe.'

Will shot another look at him, and Hannibal rubbed his shoulder. 'It's okay,' he murmured. 'It's okay.' He leaned in closer. 'Shhh, it's okay.' Will clung to his hand, gripping it tightly. 'Have the paramedics seen Will?'

'Yes,' the Principal said. 'He doesn't have serious injuries, but they would like him to go to the hospital to be seen after you've spoken to the officer.'

Will gulped visibly, and Hannibal evened out his breath, putting a steadying hand on his arm. 'Fine. Will?' He met red-rimmed eyes, 'let's get this over with okay? Let's talk to the officer. Give a statement. I'm right here. It's going to be okay.'

Will nodded, and the Principal left the room.

Hannibal leaned in and kissed Will's forehead. 'Where does it hurt?'

Will shook his head. 'Just what you can see. I'm…fine.' He cradled Will's head against his face, lips softly kissing his cheek.

The door opened, and he drew back, keeping his arm around Will. A portly, balding policeman accompanied the Principal.

'Hello, Will, Dr Lecter. My name is Officer Louis.'

Hannibal gave a perfunctory nod.

'I want to go over the details for the statement, and then we would like you to go to the hospital. Is that all right Dr Lecter?'

'Yes,' Hannibal said. His heart rate was normalising, his expression ensuring he appeared calm though he was feeling anything but that.

'Will, can you please first tell me when you saw Matthew Brown—'

Hannibal stilled, and his heartbeat quickened. Matthew Brown? No, it couldn't be.

‘Matthew Brown?’ he asked. ‘That’s the student's name?’

‘Yes,’ the Principal said at the same time as Will nodded.

Mind racing, Hannibal frowned. Was this a coincidence? Or another Matthew Brown? His stomach plummeted. Had he caused this? Him being here?

‘When was the first time you saw him, Will?’

Will took a deep breath. ‘Umm,’ he shrugged. ‘About two weeks ago, I guess in the cafeteria. I mean he was just a new face, but he’s older. We don’t have the same classes.’

‘You’ve never mentioned this…boy?’ Hannibal said to Will.

Will shrugged one shoulder. ‘I never had anything to do with him. I didn’t even know his name was Matthew.’

‘He is a troubled teen.’ The Principal attempted to explain. ‘He was expelled from his last two schools, and we have an outreach programme here. We took him a few weeks ago—’

‘A dangerous, violent teenager?’ Hannibal seethed, through gritted teeth. ‘You thought it was safe to have such a boy here. With your other students for whom you have a duty of care first and foremost?’ The acidic taste of hot bile rose in his mouth. Matthew Brown. Was here. How?

‘He had an assessment.’ She looked dejected and shook her head. ‘No one would take him, and it was a trial run…but I never imagined—’

‘We can speak about his history later, ma’am,’ the officer interrupted. ‘But first, let’s get through this.’

Hannibal’s lips thinned. He caught Will watching him and cast a quick smile. ‘You’re doing fine.’

‘So, you saw him in the cafeteria, Will. Do you remember the next time?’

‘Um, just maybe by the bleachers, when we were running track. I saw him looking at all of us. Guessed he had a free period. Was sitting alone.’ Will paused. ‘Then, the next time was outside. He asked if I had a light, and I said no. That’s the only time I’d spoken to him before today.’

‘Okay,’ the officer nodded. He was taking notes on his note pad. Pen scratching away. ‘What happened today?’

Will chewed on his tender lip, and Hannibal rubbed his hand. ‘I had a free period at the end of the day—last lesson. Most of the kids from my class went home, but I asked Miss Radcliffe if I could use the art studio. The paints. I wanted to finish off the poster for chem. She said I could. I thought it was empty when I went in. The store cupboard is like another room through the gallery, so I put my stuff down, and…’ He stopped then. Hannibal could tell the nerves had set in, and he squeezed Will’s hand.

‘I went to the cupboard, and he was there. Said he got detention and was told to sort the shelves. I said all right and took some paints and started on my poster. He was inside the whole time. He didn’t come out. I needed a yellow, so I went back in a few minutes later and then, I dunno...’ Will’s voice trailed off, his eyes unfocused as if he were reliving the scene again. Hannibal had seen this same look on *Will’s* face at crime scenes.

‘Take your time, Will,’ the officer said gently.

‘I went to get the yellow paint, and it was on the higher shelf. I reached up and got it and was about to walk away when he grabbed my T-shirt from behind.’

Hannibal closed his eyes for a moment, trying to focus. Matthew Brown had to die.

‘I thought he was doing that thing when kids sometimes grab from behind to stop you from walking or whatever. The paint pot dropped.’ Will gestured to his lap, and Hannibal noticed paint spatters on his shorts, legs and over his shoes. ‘It spilt everywhere. I said get off, and he laughed. I said, why did you do that? And he laughed again. I thought I’d better clean the mess so was going to get some towels when he pulled me back again.’

Will looked down at his hands, and Hannibal gave him a small nod, not trusting himself to speak. He could feel hatred rise, stress dots blurring his vision.

‘It happened so fast. He just grabbed me and shoved me against the shelf, and then we were on the floor, and he was sitting on top of me. He wouldn’t let me up.’

How could this have happened? He couldn’t bear to listen. Matthew Brown had attacked Will, and Hannibal had not been able to prevent it.

‘…I kept saying get off, and he held me down, held my wrists and told me to stop struggling. And I was so mad…’ Will stammered. His eyes filled with tears, and he was scowling. ‘Just so mad, and he was angry too. I could tell. The way he was speaking. Told me to stop struggling and I wouldn’t. I tried to kick him, and then he kissed me. I tried to stop him, and he bit my lip. He kept grabbing me, and I felt so angry.’ His voice was dropping. ‘And then even more angry, like he had no right to do that to me. For no reason to hurt me like that. Like he shouldn’t be hurting anyone like that. He tried to kiss me again. His tongue…. Was in my mouth and…I.’ Will took in a shaky breath, and he was struggling not to cry. He met Hannibal’s eyes with a worried look.

‘I bit it…really hard. Just bit down on it.’ He looked at the wall behind the Principal. ‘I knew I had hurt him because I could feel the blood in my mouth. It was a lot.’

Hannibal suddenly saw a flash of *Will* biting the cheek of Cordell. His teeth stained red with blood— he had been proud of *Will* for doing that, fighting back even though he was exhausted and hysterical like a trapped animal. Now, all Hannibal felt was scared for his love.

‘There was so much blood. He was holding his mouth, and he fell off me, and I pushed him away, and he was crying. He was in pain. I wasn’t trying to… but he was on me and hurting me and I …just.’

‘Will,’ Hannibal said quietly. ‘It was self-defence. No one is mad at you. No one is angry. It’s okay.’

‘Then I went to get help and…’

‘And that brings you to my statement Officer,’ the Principal interjected.

‘Thank you, Will,’ Officer Louis said. ‘I know that was really hard. You did really well. We’ll gather all the information and take it from there and when we’re able to speak to Matthew we will, but he has sustained a serious injury.’

Matthew Brown had gotten away lightly. A bitten tongue was nothing compared to what Hannibal would do to him.

‘We’re done here.’ The officer put away his notepad. ‘I might have a few more questions later this week, but right now, I would like you to come with me to the hospital. Dr Lecter, would you like to follow in the car?’

‘No,’ he said. ‘I will come with Will, and your men can drop us back to school when we are finished.’

The officer nodded.

‘Dr Lecter,’ the Principal said. ‘I think it would be a good idea to keep Will home this week, and we can talk tomorrow on the phone. Nine thirty? I could give you a call.’

He got up. ‘You have my house number?’

‘Yes.’ She read it out, and he nodded.

‘Will, I’m very sorry this happened. You’ve been very brave.’ Will glanced at her, as Hannibal led him out.

They followed the officer to the car park. Getting in the back of the car with Will, Hannibal put an arm around him, holding him close.

He had failed. He was supposed to protect Will.

They reached the local hospital and spent at least three hours with the doctor. They took photos of the injuries and completed more paperwork.

Will was fading. He looked tired and overwrought, and Hannibal did not leave his side. It was better to get it over and done with, but he was frantic to get Will home. His chest was tight with worry.

Finally, it was done, and they gave some medication for the bruising and pain killers. The police car drove them back to school, and Hannibal drove home.

Will was silent.

They went into the house, and he embraced Will tightly as soon as the door closed. Will hung onto him as Hannibal lifted him, his face buried in the crook of Hannibal's neck.

'It's okay,' he said as he carried Will upstairs and into the master bedroom en suite. 'It's okay.' He couldn't stop saying it. A chant to keep himself calm and to reassure Will at the same time. He put Will down on the armchair in the bathroom.

'Shower or bath?' he asked.

'Bath,' Will said. 'I feel really tired.'

'Okay.' He kissed Will's cheek and carefully kissed his reddened lip, pricks of broken blood vessels visible. Turning, he ran the bath.

'Lift your arms. Let's get this T-shirt off you.' Will let him slip off his top. The darker bloodstain had seeped through slightly onto Will's skin. Hannibal wet a soft flannel with warm water before gently wiping it away.

The bath filled.

'Do you want to be by yourself…'

Will shook his head.

Hannibal took off his shoes and socks. Standing him up and taking off the rest of his clothes. Will was like a limp rag doll, his limbs heavy. Hannibal wiped the paint spatters as much as he could before Will climbed into the bath. He was shivering, his teeth chattering, and Hannibal poured the heated water over his skin to warm him up.

Drawing a stool next to the tub, Hannibal got a sponge, running it over Will as he sat there, looking dazed. He washed Will's hair, gently tipping his head back. Patted another soft flannel on his face.

Will started to cry. Sobs ripped from the throat, tear-filled gasps.

Hannibal felt his heart drop at the sight and sound. Watching Will in distress was excruciating. His shoulders shook, and he pressed his hands against the flannel, hiding his face. Hannibal had never seen Will cry like this. There had never been a reason—the shock of what had happened caught up with him. Hannibal felt tears of helplessness mist his eyes as he gathered Will into his arms protectively, shirt getting wet.

Will turned his face against Hannibal's neck, tears slipping down, wetting his collar.

'It's okay, darling. It's okay,' Hannibal repeatedly said, as Will cried. He rubbed a hand up and down Will's back, the other hand gently kneading the back of his neck, thumb stroking the soft skin behind his ear. Moving onto the floor, he kneeled by the tub, drawing Will closer into the circle of his arms as Will tried to smother his sobs.

'Sorry,' he snuffled. 'Jus—'

‘No,’ Hannibal said sharply. ‘Don’t you ever be sorry. Ever. It's okay. Let it out. Don’t hold it in. I'm here. I'm not letting you go. I love you.’

He kept Will encircled, holding him, murmuring soft words, gentle kisses to his face, for as long as he needed. For as long as it took for him to quieten against Hannibal’s chest.

When he was ready to come out of the bath, Hannibal dried his hair with a hairdryer. He dabbed some bruise cream on the reddened skin and let Will change into his pyjamas, as he went downstairs to make a light dinner. They both needed to eat something, especially Will.

Hannibal was on autopilot, feeling surreal. Will had been hurt. By Matthew Brown. The thought of Will being grabbed, touched…it was unbearable.

He made two grilled cheese sandwiches and warmed a mug of milk with honey and nutmeg, taking it up in a large tray along with a bottle of water.

Will was under the covers, looking small against the large pillows. He sat up as he walked in and reached down by the side of the bed for the lap trays.

Hannibal switched on the tv for background noise, putting an arm around Will as they ate dinner.

Will had been hurt. He had experienced shock, pain; he had been scared. Had to fight back because someone was hurting him.

He had set *Will* up to be hurt. A series of tests to see what he would do, Garret Jacob Hobbs, Tobias Budge, Abel Gideon, Randall Tier, Mason Verger, Francis Dolarhyde... His precious life worth risking. Toying with him and sending people to hurt him to see how he would fight back. Hannibal stifled a strangled breath. Was this punishment? But instead of hurting him directly, life was hurting his Will.

His vision blurred as a sluice of pain streaked through him. *Will* having to fight back; having to defend himself over and over again. Of course, he succumbed, shrouded in darkness. *Will* had it in him. And possibly so did his Will. Fanning the flames would eventually cause them to ignite. A wound constantly picked at and electrocuted with a red-hot knife, would bleed, the injury irreversible. Mind, body, spirit changed forevermore. But Hannibal had honestly thought it was for the best. He thought he was helping *Will* climb out of the mundane and into the extraordinary. Even though he had broken *Will’s* trust to pieces, and *Will* never recovered from that hurt. He carried the pain like a shard of glass embedded in his heart, becoming a part of him. His blue blue eyes, revealing the sadness and anguish he had suffered if someone cared enough to look, but it was the price to pay for having Hannibal Lecter in his life.

Looking back, Hannibal knew that had been the catalyst for everything that came after, but he had been willing to spark it. There was beauty in cruelty, and if *Will* regaled and embraced that side of himself, then Hannibal would have someone to share his kills with. Someone who saw him entirely and accepted him; a friend. Hannibal never got a chance to validate the hurt, to prove that it had been worth it.

The thought of doing that to his Will was sickening.

He would *never*.

His Will thrived in light inundated with love.

Will sipped his milk and then took the tablets with a few gulps of water as he stared blankly at the screen.

Picking up the tray, Hannibal took it downstairs, leaving it on the counter and going straight back up. They got ready for bed and huddled under the blankets, Hannibal tucking Will against his body, sheltering him.

'Hannibal?' Will's voice whispered in the dark.

'Yes, Will.' He kissed the top of his head.

'I... could feel how angry he was. I could tell what he was feeling.'

Hannibal remained silent.

'Like he was venting or something. I don't even know if it was me he was angry at. He was just angry and wanted to hurt me. And I didn't feel bad when I hurt him. I was angry back, he deserved to be hurt…' He paused.

Hannibal stroked his hair.

'Will, you're not a self-sacrificing martyr. No one expects you to be. Least of all me. He was hurting you, and you fought back. Of course, you did. And if it felt good to hurt him back, then that's fine too. Nothing to feel bad about, ashamed of, at all. You could have done a lot more, and he would have deserved it, but you didn't. You did enough to get away, and that shows a lot of self-control.'

'Okay,' Will said quietly. He burrowed closer as Hannibal continued to run his fingers through his curls. Lips on Will's forehead, arms holding him in a firm embrace.

Will eventually fell asleep.

But Hannibal didn't.

At two am, he carefully got out of bed, and went downstairs, flicking the lights on in the kitchen.

His pulse was racing. He paced up and down, trying to relieve the tension that was coiling in his back, shoulders, neck.

What was Matthew Brown doing here?

Had he always been in Louisiana? Had *Will* encountered him during his school days? Hannibal had researched both *Will* and Matthew Brown at the time but couldn't recall any previous link. Why had this happened now?

Matthew Brown needed to die. The anger was burning crimson under his skin. How to kill Matthew Brown? He could leave now. Be at the hospital within fifteen minutes. He wouldn't be able to take his time with Matthew and kill him as he deserved, but it would have to do. He would make it look like an accident. Be in and out, ten minutes… He flexed his hands.

The blood lust created a red haze over his eyes.

Will had been hurt. Most people spent their whole lives without experiencing this type of violence and yet, his Will had been hurt…by a ghost from the past..or the future? How many more ghosts were in this world? Was Matthew Brown the first of many that Will would encounter?

Their perfect world was cracking. Was hell starting to bleed into his heaven? Comeuppance.

He had to be quick, leave now… get dressed and gather his things and… and…

Suddenly he snapped out of it. Saw clearly.

Will.

His sweet face, looking confused.

What if Will woke up and found the bed empty? Found Hannibal to be gone. What would he think? And what would he feel when he found out that Matthew Brown was dead so soon after the event? Would he feel somehow responsible?

Hannibal slid down the wall, his face in his hands and let out a silent scream. It was all too much.

This is what it felt like to be powerless. Helpless. Had love made him stronger or weaker? Was being happy the only sign of a life well-lived? Did Will's comfort and happiness matter more than anything?

Would he really have to let justice take its course and ensure that Matthew Brown was locked up? He pictured Will's face if he were to find out what violence Hannibal was capable of. How would he react? Hannibal wasn't hiding, wasn't wearing a person suit. He was genuinely this version of himself…happy and content. This life that would have been ideal, too good to be true, far-fetched was his actual life. He had chosen to be with Will. He had a responsibility to their relationship.

He was no longer the man he was all those years ago. If he started to kill again, the thread would start to unravel. If he tasted it again… There was no denying there was power, beauty and intimacy in taking a human life. To butcher it, cook it and eat it. He had enjoyed it, but that was then. The past had freed him when he woke up.

He couldn't bear the thought of hurting Will, find out his boyfriend was a killer. It would destroy him. Everything Will believed him to be, their life together, his hopes and dreams for them, Hannibal would ruin it all if he started killing again.

He could not do that to Will.

Letting out a deep breath, his shoulders sagged. He took several deeper breaths and flicked the lights off. Heavy footsteps back upstairs.

He got under the covers and slipped his arms around Will as he stirred sleepily.

‘Hannibal?’

‘Yes, Will?’

‘You’re upset.’

Upset didn’t begin to cover it. Closing his eyes, he tried to control his short, fast breaths. ‘I’m upset for you. You shouldn’t have had to experience something like this. It shouldn’t have happened.’

‘Dad says, *shit* happens.’

Hannibal didn’t respond.

‘I’ll be okay. I’m fine,’ Will said, comforting him again.

Hannibal pressed his chin into Will’s curls. ‘Did he say anything else? Give any indication of why?’

‘No. He just said to stop struggling. That’s all he ever said. Nothing else.’

Hannibal rocked Will in his arms. ‘I love you so much. La vita del mio cuore.’

‘T'amo, Hannibal,’ Will said. He was so soft and smelt so sweet, his darling.

Hannibal cloistered Will in the curves of his body, like a wolf protecting its mate, feeling crushed under the weight of love.

The next morning, he told Will to have a lie-in as he got up to take the Principal’s phone call. They both agreed it best that Will not attend while he bared visible marks of the attack, so would stay home next week too.

Matthew Brown would remain in hospital until his stitches were taken out and the swelling went down so he could talk. Hannibal had requested to see the boy but was denied while the case file was still open. He wanted to see if Matthew recognised him and if yes, was this an act of revenge? Meanwhile, Matthew would be charged for attempted sexual assault and taken to the juvenile detention centre until his sentencing. They didn’t think Will would need to go to court, but it depended on what Matthew Brown had to say.

Will was withdrawn over the next few days. He was sleeping a lot and listless, tired. His head on Hannibal’s lap on a cushion as they watched tv; holding his hand as Hannibal lightly massaged his head, reading a comic book without turning the pages. The light in his eyes dim and Hannibal hadn’t seen his sunny smile since that morning. He was quiet, which was unsettling, and Hannibal hovered around him, cushioning him, tenderly watching over him.

Saturday evening Will was unloading the dishwasher and putting away the cutlery. The sleeves of his long sleeve tee, which he never wore, grazed his knuckles, accompanied with grey jogging bottoms, which he also never wore. He looked lost in thought, thinking. Something.

‘Want to help me make dinner?’ Hannibal asked as Will closed a drawer.

‘Yeah,’ Will replied.

Hannibal passed him a cutting board and a knife with a few potatoes.

‘Just chop them bite size.’

‘Okay.’ Will nodded.

‘You’re an excellent sous-chef,’ Hannibal smiled.

Will flashed a small smile in return.

Hannibal got busy with various pots and pans on the go as Will chopped. He handed them over a minute later, and Hannibal slid them into the pan.

‘You’ll be staying home next week,’ he reminded.

Will nodded, looking down, picking at the edge of the counter. ‘Will you be going to work on Monday?’

Hannibal’s brow creased. ‘Of course not, I will be staying home with you. I’ve taken time off work.’

Will’s head jerked up, eyes brimming with unshed tears.

‘Darling?’ Hannibal tipped his chin up, as Will furiously blinked and swallowed. ‘What are you thinking?’

Will shook his head. ‘I should have… just..I mean. You’re having to stay home with me, and I’m sorry—’

‘Will—' Hannibal said.

‘I’m a burden—'

‘Hey,’ Hannibal snapped. He forced Will to meet his eyes. ‘Don’t you ever say that ever again. You are not, and never will be a burden. There is nowhere for me to be, other than by your side. Do you understand?’ Will clamped his lips together, and Hannibal cupped his face with both hands. ‘Do you understand?’

He nodded.

Hannibal pressed Will's cheek against his, feeling the long lashes flicker against his skin, the open mouth drawing in small, hitched breaths.

'I should have just left the room. When I saw him there, I should have just left. I should have got away sooner. I'm sorry.'

'Will…' *What on earth...*

Will's face lowered, muffled against his shoulder. 'I should have fought to get away harder. I shouldn't have bit him…I hurt him. I…should have got away and left and not said anything. I shouldn't have said anything. I've made it into a big deal, I'm sorry…'

'Will!' Hannibal gripped his upper arms, feeling unhinged. 'Stop saying you're sorry!' Fury at the situation spiralling to the surface. 'I do not want to hear you say that, ever.'

Will dropped his eyes, his lashes wet.

Oh god. Too much time to think. That's what was happening here. Hannibal thought Will had accepted he had done the right thing, self-defence but mere days later… it was all too real, too horrible, what would everyone be saying at school? If he had stayed quiet none of this would have happened. Hannibal could tell all the thoughts running through Will's head.

'I'll say it again and say it as many times as you need to hear it. You were attacked, you fought back, got away and got help. Those are the facts. If this happened to someone you cared about, would you feel the same way? Someone, you care about is attacked and think they should have stayed quiet about being hurt? Or they feel bad for causing injury to the person who hurt them in the first place? What advice would you give them?'

He felt the uncomfortable parallel dig at him.

Will pressed his head against Hannibal's chest, arms folded under his chin.

'They did the right thing…' he said in a low voice.

Hannibal closed his eyes, rocking Will gently. 'Stop making that boy into a victim, someone to be pitied. He isn't any of those things. He did this. He is responsible for his actions, no one else. Stop doubting defending yourself. Stop torturing yourself with such thoughts. They are useless and flawed. I can not hear you say such things.'

He pulled back to look into Will's face. 'You did the right thing. That's it.'

Will nodded.

'I need you to understand that and accept it.'

Will closed his eyes and took in a deep breath, letting it out slowly.

'Okay.' His eyes looked a bit clearer, the strain lifting slightly from his beautiful face.

Hannibal kissed his forehead and patted his arms. 'Good. Now, let's get dinner made.'

Sunday morning, they were having breakfast, and Hannibal watched Will stir his cornflakes, prodding at them.

‘We need to consider telling your father when he calls this afternoon.’

‘No,’ Will said instantly, a decided look on his face. ‘No, way.’

‘Why?’ Hannibal asked. He didn’t want to tell Will’s father either, but it was a conversation that needed to be aired.

‘Because, if I tell him then he’s gonna feel like he needs to come back. That means he’ll leave the job early and won’t get paid the full amount. Plus, there’s nothing he can actually do, and I’ll have to go back home, and…’ Will continued. ‘He won’t handle it like you have, he’ll just feel bad and not know what to do.’

‘Okay,’ Hannibal said simply. Glad that was out of the way.

A few days later, there was a knock on the door. Hannibal answered it to see a blonde-haired teenage girl shifting from one foot to another on the porch. She was holding a large rucksack.

‘Hello, can I help you?’

‘Hi, I’m Penny. I’m here to bring Will his homework?’ She looked up at Hannibal with unblinking brown eyes.

‘Ah, yes.’ He smiled. ‘The Principal informed me.’

She nodded.

‘That is very kind of you. Wait for just a moment, and I’ll tell Will.’ Her head craned to the side to get a glimpse into the house as Hannibal closed the door slightly.

Will was playing on the video console as he entered the lounge. ‘A Penny here to see you, she comes bearing homework.’

Will paused the game.

‘Would you like to see her, or should I take the books and send her on her way?’

‘Nah, it’s fine.’ Will got up. ‘I’ll see her…’ He hesitated. ‘I wanna know what they’re saying at school.’

‘As you wish,’ Hannibal said and went back to the front door opening it further.

‘Please come inside Penny. Will is in the lounge.’ She darted past him quickly, and he grimaced in disapproval.

‘Hey, Will,’ he heard her chirp as he went in after her.

‘Can I offer you a refreshment, Penny?’

‘Oh no, thank you! I’m fine.’ She had a high, pitched excitable voice.

‘Okay, I’ll leave you to talk. I’ll be in the kitchen, Will.’

‘Thanks.’ Will gave him a swift smile.

Hannibal took his leave but hovered in the corridor. He had no intention of leaving Will alone with Penny.

‘Wow, that’s your adopted brother? He is soo gorgeous.’

‘He’s not my adopted brother. Hannibal is a good family friend.’ Will sounded annoyed.

‘This house is like wow, like from a tv show.’ She sounded like she was moving around the room. ‘Can’t believe you get to live here…’

‘Yeah,’ Will said. ‘So, you have my homework?’

‘Oh, duh! Soree. Here.’ A sound of books clattering on the coffee table. ‘So, it's just like reading or whatever, but I don’t think you have to do it, y’ know. No one is expecting you to.’

‘Why?’ Will sounded wary. ‘What are they saying at school?’

‘Well, y’know.’ She said meaningfully. ‘They’re saying that new kid, Brown, well…’ A pause. ‘Tried to have sex with you in the art cupboard.’ Her voice dropped to a loud whisper.

‘He didn’t try and have sex with me in the cupboard.’

‘He didn’t?’ she sounded sceptical and almost disappointed. ‘My mommy said that she heard Roxanne’s mommy say that she knows a nurse at the hospital where that kid is, and they heard the cops talkin’ and…’ Another pause. Hannibal thought about stepping in.

‘He attacked you, right? And you like bit his tongue off?’ She said in hushed tones. ‘Is it true the janitor found it, and they had to stitch it back on?’

Hannibal promptly walked back in. ‘Well, thank you so much, Penny. So kind of you to come over. Give my regards to your mother.’ He gestured to the doorway, and she looked surprised.

‘Oh, errr… okay,’ she said with a brightly painted smile. ‘So, Will, hope you feel better soon. See you at school. Byeee.’ She waved and darted past Hannibal again, running down the drive. Hannibal watched her go and closed the door.

Will was sitting on the sofa, looking morose.

‘That’s what they’re all saying at school. When I go back, I’m gonna be that kid that Brown tried to have sex with in the art cupboard.’ He gave a bitter laugh. ‘Oh, and I bit his tongue off, which the janitor found.’

Hannibal wrapped Will in his arms. ‘Sensationalism out of tragedy.’ He thought of Freddie Lounds. ‘There is no getting away from that I’m afraid. The truth will get lost in the sea of gossip, and you’ll have to ride it out. It won’t be forever, but unfortunately, that is what will happen. I’m sorry. No point me telling you otherwise.’

‘Wish I didn’t have to go back,’ Will mumbled. ‘Just go somewhere new and start fresh…’ He picked at the cuffs of his long sleeves.

‘You can,’ Hannibal said.

‘What?’ He looked shocked.

‘If you want to go to a new school in the new year, you can.’

‘How?’ Will drew up a knee on the sofa, facing Hannibal.

‘Summer vacation is only a month away. You withdraw from school, and we visit some prospective ones before the break. When your father returns, you visit the ones you like the best and pick one to start your senior year.’

‘Just like that?’ Will looked amazed. ‘It’s as simple as that?’

‘Can be,’ Hannibal said. He would make it so. ‘Your grades are excellent, and given the events, you’ll have no problem getting accepted.’

Will gawped.

‘Don’t have to make a decision this instant,’ Hannibal said smoothly. ‘Sleep on it, and we can discuss it further tomorrow.’

In truth, Hannibal always wanted Will to go to another school. A better school. A private school. This was the perfect opportunity to do just that.

The next morning, they were in bed. Will was idly playing with his hand.

‘Did you mean what you said yesterday?’

‘Yes, of course,’ Hannibal replied, lacing their fingers together. ‘Right now, I am your legal guardian, and you are nearly seventeen. You can withdraw and start somewhere new if you wish.’

‘And what about dad?’ Will sounded uneasy. ‘He’ll be mad…at me.’

‘I will talk to him. Make him see it’s for the best.’

Will looked doubtful.

‘Promise,’ Hannibal said. ‘If that’s what you want, I’ll make it happen.’

They decided to leave it another day, but Will felt the same when they discussed it again. He had friends but none he would call best friends. He wasn't one to form intense friendships, keeping his circle small.

He looked relieved at the prospect of not having to go back and deal with all the pointed looks and muted whispers.

Even though there was no social media at this stage, Hannibal knew gossip still spread like wildfire and inevitably Will would have to confront it even with his new peers, but he would be better equipped to handle it. Months down the line.

Will sat and listened, as Hannibal placed the phone call to the Principal. He told her in clipped tones that Will would not be returning to school. That he and Will would come the next day, after school ended, to sign relevant papers and collect Will's items from his locker. He gave her a week to get Will's report ready.

As they drove to school, Hannibal asked Will if he was sure and Will gave a definitive yes.

And it was done.

Chapter End Notes

Reason for this chapter:
1) Matthew Brown always creeped me out, watching Will, sending him an ear even though Hannibal thought it was a love letter (ick) and no one else seemed that bothered.
2) To unsettle Hannibal and show him even perfect worlds have imperfections. There are 'ghosts' in this timeline.
3) Have him confront his feelings for dead Will, and having to control his blood lust.
4) Show Will can defend himself and has it in him to bite through a tongue
5) I wanted Will to go to private school, but there had to be a good reason.

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Hannibal books a holiday.
Will is seventeen by the end of the chapter.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

‘I’m a dropout,’ Will said in an awed voice. They had eaten dinner, and Will was tucked next to Hannibal on the sofa. He looked shell-shocked by the enormity of withdrawing from school.

‘You’re not a dropout,’ Hannibal said, placing a kiss amidst his curls. ‘You’re just starting your summer vacation early that’s all.’

Will looked up at him, his fingers drumming an uneven tempo on Hannibal’s chest. Hannibal stilled them.

‘Let’s go on holiday.’

‘What?’ Will sat up slightly.

‘Let’s get away. Just go somewhere. Where do you want to go?’ He kissed his ear. ‘Venice, Barcelona…London. Anywhere. Name it…’

A flicker of excitement passed over Will’s features, and he smiled for the first time in nearly two weeks. ‘Hannibal, I don’t have a passport,’ he laughed.

Passport… oh. That would need to be rectified… when Will turned eighteen.

‘Fine, anywhere in America.’ He waved his hand. ‘Anywhere.’

‘Anywhere?’ Will slid an arm around Hannibal’s neck, hiking himself up.

‘Anywhere.’

‘Disney?’

A pause of less than a heartbeat and Hannibal said, ‘Florida or California?’

‘California.’

‘Done.’ Hannibal said.

‘Seriously?’

‘Seriously. Anything for you, my love.’

‘Oh my god. Really? Thank you.’ Will’s eyes shone a deep blue, his expression bright.

Yes, Hannibal would do anything for that smile.

Hannibal had forgotten what it was like to book a holiday without the internet. So far, he’d only vacationed in Paris to see his family every Christmas, and all he did was phone the travel agents, and they would deliver tickets at the office. Booking an actual holiday *at* the travel agents was bizarre. He took Will with him where he proceeded to book flights to Los Angeles and the hotel resort with tickets to Disney Land, and other theme parks. They would leave on Sunday evening (after the scheduled phone call with Will’s father), and be back the following Sunday mid-morning, in time for the next one. Not being there to receive the phone call would bring up questions that Will wasn’t ready to answer yet.

Will’s mood changed considerably with the new distraction. He was excited and looked delighted to be packing a suitcase for his first plane journey. He had gone camping and fishing with his father, but they had never had a proper holiday. Hannibal assumed that it was a rite of passage for every American to go to at least one of the Disney parks, and he was happy to fulfil Will’s wishes.

The plane journey was just over three and a half hours, and Will looked thrilled to be buying magazines and sweets for the trip. Hannibal made sure Will had a window seat and held his hand, looking at him fondly as they took off.

They were booked in the best suite in the hotel, with two king-size beds and a lounge. Will took great joy in concocting an elaborate tale of Hannibal being his long-lost relative who had moved from Europe to see the remarkable wonders of America. The woman at the check-in desk couldn’t stop smiling at Hannibal and openly flirting with him. Will looked amused and did a wicked impersonation of her in the lift.

‘Oh, Dr Lecter, why, aren’t you ever so polite? Young Will here is lucky to have such an established gentleman accompanying him…’ His southern drawl straight from ‘Gone with the Wind’, theatrically batting his lashes and fanning his hand in front of his face.

‘Having fun, are we?’ Hannibal chuckled as Will guffawed loudly.

He wanted to sleep in the same bed as Hannibal, so pulled back the covers of the other bed every day and mussed it up to make it look slept in for housekeeping. He industriously planned which rides they would go on, where they would eat (pizza, nuggets, burgers), with a full American breakfast in the mornings. Hannibal went along with it with the threat that when they returned home, it would be fresh vegetables and fruit for a week.

‘Hannibal, you don’t have to buy me something in every single shop we go in,’ Will had said as they came back to the hotel every evening laden with bags.

‘You should have everything you want.’

Will gave him a quick kiss on the side of his mouth, hugging him tightly. ‘I’m not a spoilt brat, but you make it hard.’

‘You most certainly are not a spoilt brat, which is why I want to do it.’

It was the truth. Will was deeply respectful of his possessions and thankful for all his gifts. He very rarely asked Hannibal to buy him anything, bar the matching Goofy hats, (which he insisted they wore in the theme parks) with matching pyjamas (he insisted they slept in). Hannibal indulged his every whim, his heart full of love seeing Will happy.

‘When I get older and get a job, I’ll earn money too—’

‘Will,’ Hannibal kissed the tip of his nose. ‘You don’t ever have to worry about money, okay? But yes, when you get older and get a job, we can have a joint account for food and buy all your preferred snacks and junk food with your hard-earned dollar bills, how’s that?’

Will looked elated, ‘well, I would want to contribute in a meaningful way.’

Hannibal chuckled, hugging his darling.

The week flew past densely packed with theme park rides, shows, shopping, parades, firework displays, running in and out of the hotel and the constant consumption of food.

Sunday morning came too soon when they checked out, and Will was reflective on the journey back.

‘We’ll go on holiday again, my love,’ Hannibal told him when they got home and lugged in their suitcases and bags.

‘Yeah, I know,’ Will said, but that was not what was troubling him.

They talked to Will’s father keeping the conversation centred around his news. He would be back in two weeks.

Meanwhile, Hannibal collected Will’s report, and they discussed which schools to visit during the week. Four public schools and one private.

Will was using the blender to make juice while Hannibal passed him bits of cut-up fruits.

‘Hannibal, I can’t go to a private school.’ Will was saying. ‘Dad—'

Will shoved a large piece of pear down the tube, and Hannibal caught an image of standing over a drugged *Will*, pushing Abigail’s ear down his throat and forcing it down. *“Whatever you remember, if you do remember, will be a distortion of reality. Not the truth of events.”*

Bile rose in his mouth, souring his tongue.

‘Will, stop. I’ll finish that.’ Will stepped back and went to get glasses as Hannibal tried to breathe through his nose and shake the image away. Bringing the conversation back on track, he said. ‘Don’t make assumptions just yet. See them all first, and then we will talk.’

They visited the four public schools, and Hannibal saw the look on Will's face when they toured the last one, the private school. The way he looked at the large swimming pool, the tennis courts, the huge library.

'They teach Italian,' he said, spotting a timetable, his finger lingering on the notice board.

On the way home, he was quiet.

'Will, what are you thinking?'

'Nothing…' he said, his gaze turned towards the side window. 'When I was younger, we used to move around a lot, and I was always the new kid. Before we moved here, I used to get a bus that went past a private school, and I saw them in their fancy cars and parents dropping them off.' He shrugged.

'Their life seemed miles away from yours?'

'Yeah. Like it wasn't for me.'

'Everything is yours, if you want it, Will.'

Hannibal gave him a side glance, patting his knee. 'If you want to go to this school you can. I know the headmaster. He is a member of the country club, and I've had lunch with him a few times. I know they have spots for scholarship students. There might be a full one available or a partial one even. We can look into it if that is the school you like the best.'

Will shot him a look. 'I don't know how dad would feel…'

'Let me handle that.' Hannibal gave him a reassuring smile. Even if scholarships were not available, Hannibal would pay the fees and tell Will's father there were. He didn't want Will missing out, and if Will wanted to go there, he would make it happen.

Their last week together was bittersweet. Will curled up in his arms as they watched movies on the sofa, easy comfort food taken on lap trays in front of the tv. At night, Will's face huddled against Hannibal's neck. Hannibal's fingers featherlight, stroking his hair, his arms, his hands. They shared a few, quick, close-mouthed kisses since then but nothing more. Will needed to heal, and when he was ready for more, he would initiate it himself. Though sexual intimacy played a significant role in their relationship, it was essential they had the same amount of comfort and care towards one another without it. Spending time together, doing things together, talking, laughing, chatting. They were best friends first.

All too soon, the day came when Will's father returned. He had arrived late at night and assumed Will was at school the next day. Hannibal said he would drop Will in the afternoon.

Will was nervous and fidgety. His marks on his arms had faded, but Hannibal could see him circling his wrists distractedly.

'It's going to be okay,' Hannibal told him before they left the house. He gave a crushing hug, Will's face squashed against his chest. 'It's all right, love. We're going to tell him everything together.'

Will's father sensed something was wrong as soon as he saw his son. Although Will was a great actor when motivated and in the right mood, he was unable to hide his sombre expression. Hannibal suggested they sit down and talk, and he waited for Will to start the conversation, which Will did in stops and starts. His father was frowning and looking concerned. His first appalled question was, why didn't you tell me? And on and on it went.

Hannibal asked Will to give them a few minutes to talk alone. Will looked grateful and hurried off to his bedroom.

Will's father was understandably upset, angry, alarmed with all that had taken place in his absence. Hannibal worked hard to convince him that leaving school and starting somewhere new would be ideal for Will. Hannibal was only paving the way, but it was up to father and son to make the final decision. It was necessary Will's father felt part of the process.

Will phoned Hannibal that night. It was late.

'I can't sleep,' Will whispered. He had taken the phone into his room, in his bed, under the covers. 'I don't know if I'll be able to…without you.'

Hannibal felt the same. 'Put a pillow next to you.'

'You think a pillow is a good substitute for you?'

'I'm not as soft.' He pictured Will's face, and sighed. 'How's your father?'

'Um,' Will said. 'I think it would have been easier for him if I'd just got beaten up. Given a black eye or something. This…is different.' He paused. 'I can tell from his words and the way he is.'

'Well, it's good that you can understand that, so you know how best to manage him but don't forget these are his thoughts and feelings. Don't absorb them onto yourself. Keep them separate from your thoughts, okay? Remember what we talked about?'

'Yes.'

Hannibal slid into his bed covers, switching off the main light. He clicked on the bedside table lamp.

'You're getting into bed?' Will said. He sounded wistful.

'Mmm.'

'When can we get married, Hannibal?'

Hannibal felt a jolt, his heart free falling with fondness at the solemnly spoken words.

'When you graduate from college, we can discuss it. An engagement period if you wish for that.'

'College?'

‘Or much later,’ Hannibal said quickly. ‘When it feels right, caro. I’m not going anywhere. I’m right here. No rush.’

‘I…’ Will sighed.

‘I love you, darling.’ Hannibal’s voice said with a smile. ‘You should try and sleep. We can talk tomorrow.’

Will huffed and then said. ‘Love you too. Speak tomorrow.’

In the following week, Hannibal tried to give father and son some space. Will phoned him every night, taking the phone into his room and talking quietly, catching Hannibal up on the day’s events. Calling to say goodnight and make sure Hannibal wasn’t lonely. How sweet.

However, the house felt empty. Will’s toothbrush was missing, his favourite towel, his toiletries. Clothes no longer strewn on the armchair. No shoes in the hallway. No snacks trailing over the coffee table. His presence was missing in every room. Hannibal wandered through the house like a ghost, hollow-eyed. Waking up without his soft, sleep warmed body tangled with his—the press of his face, the smell of his hair, his skin. Hannibal missed him. So much. It was tough to stay away. Torturous.

He was finally allowed to see Matthew Brown in the juvenile centre after he was charged with another crime of assault on his ex-boyfriend who looked remarkably like Will. He didn’t recognise Hannibal at all, only knew him as Will’s guardian.

In the past, Hannibal would have loved to have given Matthew Brown a hallucinogenic as he had with Mason Verger and get him to eat his face, lips, maybe slice off his fingers. There was so much power and satisfaction in manipulating someone. Thrilling.

But Hannibal was not going to do that.

Matthew Brown was going to prison as soon as he turned eighteen and locked away for a few years. Hannibal ensured a restraining order was in place for when he eventually got out. Killing him would not be worth the risk.

Hannibal walked away without looking back.

He invited Will and his father for tea after they had visited the school's Will liked the most. Will chewed on his bottom lip as his father said the private school was the nicest but…

Hannibal leapt in and said if they liked the private school, Hannibal would talk to the headmaster about a scholarship. It would be no trouble and would be a fantastic opportunity for Will and put him in good stead for college applications. Hannibal was happy to help.

Will’s father looked embarrassed and overwhelmed. Hannibal remained humble and said he didn’t want him beholden, and that he simply had the means, so there was no reason Will could not benefit from that. Using his psychiatric skills to use, he flattered the man and made him feel like he was a great father, and it was all for Will’s wellbeing. Hannibal waxing lyrical, using charm to his advantage.

Will's father said he could go if he got the full scholarship, he didn't want Hannibal to pay the fees.

Will was accepted on a partial scholarship, and Hannibal told the headmaster to tell Will's father otherwise, promptly transferring the remaining fees with extra for books and uniform. He threw Will a celebratory dinner, and before they came round, Hannibal spoke to Will's father about his present for Will's seventeenth birthday. The man reluctantly agreed.

Arriving on time, Will's father clutched a bottle of wine (which Hannibal knew Will had picked) and a beignet gift basket, to say thank you. He had said thank you multiple times, and Hannibal had to keep saying there was no need for it.

'I checked the buses,' Will said after they finished their meal. 'Takes two buses to get there, which is fine because I can do a lot of reading that way.'

'Well,' Hannibal said with a smile. 'About that. Your father has something to tell you.'

To which, Will's father told him that he had gotten Will a car. Nothing showy, but it was a reliable little runner. Will's mouth dropped open. The reality was that Hannibal had performed an appendectomy on a little girl a few months ago and the father owned a car showroom. He agreed to reduce the price for Hannibal considerably, as Will's father insisted on paying.

'But I don't know how to drive,' Will said flabbergasted. 'I'll have to take lessons.'

Hannibal pushed an envelope in front of him. 'Happy birthday.'

It was driving lessons starting the next day. Will looked overjoyed, hugged his father, and gave Hannibal a one-armed squeeze. Happy tears sparkling in his eyes, and Hannibal hid a fond look steeped with adoration behind his hand.

Will came straight to his house after his first driving lesson and flung his arms around him, hugging him tightly.

'Thank you, thank you. I know it was you. All of it.'

Hannibal hugged him back as Will kissed his cheeks multiple times.

'I love you. I love you. I love you. Thank you. Thank you.' Will couldn't stop saying it. 'Ti amo tanto, Hannibal. Grazie.'

'And you haven't even started lessons yet,' Hannibal smiled, feeling warm with all the affection heaped on him. 'Top of the class in a week I expect. Sei il mio cuore, il mio amore, il mio tutto.'

Anything for his precious love.

Chapter End Notes

The next few chapters will be really sweet, sexy and tender. Will’s POVs

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

A Will POV chapter of how Will's relationship developed with Hannibal and moving the time line forward to a few months before his eighteenth birthday.

Chapter Notes

'Will, are you manipulative?'
'Me?' he says innocently. 'No.' *batting his pretty eyes*

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Will had always thought Hannibal was nice. Since the first day they had met, he gave Will his undivided attention and listened to him. Like every word Will said mattered.

The first time he thought Hannibal was super cool, was a few weeks after their initial meeting and he was supposed to go camping with his dad. It was a Friday, and it started raining ‘cats and dogs’ and really dark. The pickup truck wheezed to a stop with a flat tyre on the way out of town, and dad left him in the car to go to a payphone for roadside help. He came back soaked with one of his friends he had met on the way. Roadside said they would be a few hours because there was no spare tyre, and someone had to drive somewhere to get one. Will wasn’t going camping.

As his dad and friend sat talking in the front seats, Will fidgeted in the back, bored. He recognised the road and knew Hannibal didn’t live far away, and his stomach was starting to grumble.

‘Can I go to Hannibal’s to wait?’ he asked. Hannibal had a nice big tv, and his house would be warm, and there might be food.

Dad said they could see if Hannibal was home, and only if he didn’t mind. So, the three of them drenched by the rain, turned up at Hannibal’s doorstep, much to the man’s surprise.

Dad asked if Will could wait in the dining room, and he would be no trouble and behave. Will frowned, giving his dad a disgruntled look. He wasn’t a child!

Hannibal said, of course, Will could wait, and they left a blinking, dripping wet Will in the hallway. Hannibal led him to the bathroom, handing him a towel to dry off. He came back a

few minutes later holding a pair of drawstring shorts and socks with a hoodie that was too large for Will but looked soft and warm.

‘Get changed in these, and I’ll put your wet clothes in the dryer, okay? Don’t want you catching a chill.’

‘Thank you,’ Will said.

When Will came out of the bathroom, Hannibal made him a fancy omelette with toast without even asking if he was hungry. Will gratefully ate the plate of food and drank a tall glass of juice, while Hannibal took his wet clothes to the laundry room. At this stage, Hannibal was tutoring him once a week, and they didn’t know each other very well.

Afterwards, Hannibal put on the tv and let Will watch whatever he wanted.

‘Sorry, you won’t be able to go camping this weekend,’ Hannibal said.

Will shrugged. ‘It’s fine.’ And then he had a thought. ‘When I was little, and we missed going camping, we would make a fort in the sitting room and sleep in it.’

‘Would you like to build one now?’ Hannibal asked.

Will grinned, scrunching his face. ‘I’m not little anymore.’

‘No, but I haven’t ever made a fort before. You could show me how.’ Hannibal was smiling but looked serious. Will did like forts but thought he was too grown up for them.

‘All right,’ he said, ducking his head and laughing. ‘I can show you how. They’re really easy.’

‘That would be wonderful, Will. Thank you.’

‘You’re welcome.’

He helped Hannibal get bed sheets and fleece blankets from the linen closet. It was the first time he had gone upstairs, and Hannibal’s house was epic, it looked like a house from a lifestyle magazine.

They took the chairs from the dining room, and a really tall lamp which Hannibal took the shade and bulb out of, so it was like a tall pole. Spreading the chairs in a big square, they draped the blankets and bedsheets over the backs with the lamp in the centre, tenting the ceiling. Hannibal got some garden string lights and strung them up, and with more blankets as flooring and lots of cushions to sit on, the fort was made. It was very impressive. Will couldn’t help beaming as they sat inside eating cookies and drinking hot chocolate, while the rain came down heavily against the windows. It was very cosy. Hannibal was really fun.

He started to come to Will’s debates, spelling bees, always clapping, and looking really proud, with two thumbs up. Will’s dad was usually working at that time and rarely attended. Will never minded, but it was nice to see someone who was there for him in the audience. He called Will, ‘brilliant’ and a ‘wonderful young man’ with ‘exceptionally good manners’.

Always giving too much pocket money for little chores Will didn't even do on his own, as Hannibal was always there helping him. He was generous and gave him gifts. Will felt shy at first and wasn't sure if he should accept them, but he could tell how much it meant to Hannibal to give them, so he said thank you. He helped Will with his science projects, his homework, taught him conversational Italian and French and even some Lithuanian phrases. He never made doing homework dull.

Hannibal only worked two or three days a week, depending on his schedule and went to the country club on his days off and weekends. When Will turned fourteen, with the long stretch of summer ahead of him, Hannibal asked Will if he would like to accompany him, as there was a large swimming pool and tennis court and it was free for under 16's. Will said yes, and Hannibal asked his dad for permission. Dad had never set foot in the fancy country club but said if it was free of charge, and Hannibal didn't mind, then he could go.

Hannibal bought him a tennis racket and outfit and taught him how to play. They sat afterwards over pitchers of lemonade, watching distant games of golf, and talked under the magnolia trees. They talked about everything and anything. Hannibal was the smartest person he knew. He had gone to cookery school and taught Will basics about cooking and presentation. He was a fantastic artist; Will had seen his sketches of buildings. He could play the piano as good as anyone in a professional orchestra and even taught Will a few pieces as Will found it easy to memorise notes and placement of fingers. Will really liked spending time with him and started to call him his best friend.

He knew Hannibal had *other* friends. Acquaintances, he called them and often went out for dinner and to the theatre in the evenings. Will didn't *think* he was dating anyone even though Will always noticed women staring at him when they went out. At the house, Will had never seen or heard anything that suggested otherwise, but he hadn't asked. He really didn't like the idea of Hannibal having a girlfriend…or boyfriend.

And then one day, Hannibal kissed him on his forehead, and it changed everything.

On that particular day, they were in the country club pool, which Will had been in a few times. There were plenty of people dotted around—lots of families with children and teenagers lolling about. Will was finally daring to jump from the high springboard. Hannibal looking up at him, smiling in encouragement. Will bounced up and down a few times and then did an almost perfect dive into the water.

Coming up, he saw Hannibal grinning and applauding.

Then he noticed Hannibal's chest.

As if he was seeing it for the first time.

Had his chest always been so muscular and defined, like something out of that programme with lifeguards? His hair slicked back, his chest glistening and Will suddenly had a realisation that Hannibal was beautiful. Will knew he was handsome. Everyone thought Hannibal was handsome. His skin was dewy and flawless, stretched over high cheekbones. He looked like a golden mannequin and his accent, the way his words brushed past his teeth

and lips. He had incredible lips. Wide and full. But Will never thought to put a word to it before. Until now.

Beautiful.

Hannibal was the most beautiful person he had ever seen.

His mouth dropped open, catching flies, and he blinked. For some reason he ducked underwater, idiotically leaving his mouth wide open. Immediately, inhaling great gulps of water, up his nose, down his throat, and he came up spluttering and gasping, flailing his hands. The water was stinging.

'Hey, hey.' Hannibal's arms were instantly around him, holding him up. Will coughed as the water burned and he vaguely heard the lifeguard say, 'is he okay Dr Lecter?'

'Yes, he's fine. Just swallowed a jug full of water.' Hannibal rubbed Will's back as he coughed some more, his eyes feeling hot, mouth desperate for air. Looking amused but concerned, his eyes crinkled, face bobbing close to Will. 'All right?' He asked gently, smiling.

Will nodded and coughed some more feeling embarrassed. His cheeks striped red.

Hannibal rubbed his arms. 'Aww,' he chuckled and cupped Will's face in his big hands and then kissed him on his forehead. 'It's okay. You're all right.' He gently touched the back of Will's neck and drew him close for a moment in a protective hug.

Face feeling heated; Will tried to think unsexy thoughts. Someone ugly. A bad feeling. A bad smell. The worst teacher at school. Anything to take his eyes away from Hannibal's chest, Hannibal's lips, Hannibal's strong arms.

He lightly squeezed Will on the shoulder, 'shall we get some ice-cream?'

Ice cream? Like he was some ten-year-old needing to be comforted with a dessert? Geez. Which is why the forehead incident would forever be burned into Will's memory, because it was the first time his mind shifted, and Hannibal had turned from being a best friend to a best friend he had a crush on.

After this great revelation, Will tried to think of situations where he would need to be close to Hannibal. Be able to touch him, innocently, of course, to feel the strength of his arms, the pleasurable tingle of contact, no matter how briefly. He wanted to be near him. Hannibal thought he was just a kid, which was annoying—being young sucked.

The first time Hannibal had taken him to the shops he had said, 'Will, don't wander off. Stay where I can see you.'

Will's cheeks had coloured, and he hissed, 'Hannibal, I'm thirteen!! Not three!' Mortifying much.

Hannibal smiled and patted his head. 'Will, I have a responsibility for when I take you out.' He had given a teasing smile, 'seriously, how are you with crossing main roads?' and Will

gave an outraged look.

So yes, being fourteen sucked but it was better than being thirteen. Now, at fourteen, there was a new delight in being in Hannibal's presence.

At Halloween, Will suggested a Haunted Hayride. He asked his dad first, knowing full well he would say no.

'But Dad, I really want to go.'

'Maybe ask Hannibal?'

Gleefully, Will asked, and he said yes. Haunted Hayrides were genuinely scary, and Will clutched at Hannibal's arm as the cart bumped along the dark path, into the trees. When the masked man wielding a chainsaw jumped out in front of them, everyone on the cart shrieked, and Will turned and pressed his face against Hannibal's shoulder. Hannibal for the first time put his arm around Will properly and kept it there for the duration of the ride. Feeling incredibly safe and giddy as monsters jumped out from the dark. Will felt his crush blossom into the most wonderful feeling of happiness.

The next year after his fifteenth birthday, Hannibal gifted him with a new bike, and they went for a long ride on a bike trail.

Will was a competent rider and was doing a wheelie when an unseen pothole caused him to topple over. Hannibal gave an alarmed shout and rushed towards him, making sure he wasn't hurt. Will purposely took just *a bit* longer getting up, so he could feel Hannibal gripping his shoulders to balance him. His strong arms coming around Will in a quick hug, a gentle finger over a barely-there scrape as he brushed off the dirt from Will's knee. Totally worth it.

Hannibal was *furious*. Will had never seen him angry. His fists were clenched, and at six foot, he seemed to loom even taller, all lean and tense muscles rippling. He looked like he was going to pick up the trail centre man and throw him clear through the wall. He had *such* a go; the man looked like he was about to cry, lip quivering and sweating. He gave Will free coffee, and snack vouchers for a local coffee shop for four months and at once phoned trail maintenance to fix the pothole. Protective Hannibal gave Will warm shuddery feelings, and Will tried not to make too many googly eyes.

In the new school year, Hannibal helped him with an art history project, and Will asked if they could go to a gallery to see one of the paintings they had discussed in class. He looked really pleased like he'd been told it was Christmas every day and said if Will wanted, they could go once a month and do something cultural. Will said that would be 'awesome. Yes, please. Thank you, Hannibal.' That's how their monthly outings started.

On Halloween, Will asked if they could have a movie night. A horror marathon. He agreed and asked Will's dad, who said yes. Will, buzzing with excitement selected movies that were supposed to have a lot of jump scares.

He and Hannibal made actual pizza's, dough, and everything, with all sorts of toppings. Hannibal even made strawberry, and peanut-butter milkshakes, and bought Will's favourite

cookies. Hannibal was perfect.

The idea of cosying up on the sofa, with the lights off and under the blankets, was thrilling to Will. Hannibal started movie number one. Unfortunately, he was on the other end of the sofa, and Will couldn't find a reason to get any closer.

When the movie ended, Hannibal flicked on the lights and said he would make popcorn. Will watched him leave the room and sat there for a moment. The movie had been a bit scary, and the white curtains kept moving on the large window. Will frowned and uneasily looked around the big room. The space under the table in the corner seemed very dark, like a shadowy hole. The tv screen was flickering black, and he could see his reflection in it. What if something came up behind him…

He didn't want to be alone.

He got up and ran after Hannibal reaching for his hand.

'I'll come with you.'

Hannibal pressed his fingers lightly before letting go. 'Certainly, Will.'

Will sat on the stool as Hannibal started to make popcorn using a big pan with a lid. As the popping noise started, Will needed to go to the bathroom. But it was all the way down the corridor.

'I'm just going to go to the bathroom,' he said. 'Will you stay here?' He tried to ask casually but didn't want Hannibal switching off the lights and going back into the lounge.

'Of course,' Hannibal said with a small smile.

'Okay. I'll be really quick.' He hurried down the hall and was about to close the door but decided to leave it slightly ajar, just in case. He used the bathroom as fast as he could before running and then slowing down as he reached the kitchen.

'Would you like to make the topping with me?' Hannibal asked, getting a small saucepan out. He added water and then sugar and butter, whisking it. Once he took it off the heat, he asked Will to add the cream in, whisking it thoroughly with a generous helping of cinnamon.

'Perfect,' he said, and Will felt pleased with the praise. 'Let's pour it carefully over the popcorn and give it a good mix. Get everything coated.'

Hannibal put the lid back on and shook the pan a few times. Will couldn't help admiring the way his muscles looked in the shirt he was wearing.

He took the lid off. 'C'est bon. Tres bien,' and lifted out a shiny kernel to Will who popped it into his mouth.

'Yum.' He grinned.

Hannibal ruffled his hair and tipped the popcorn into a large bowl.

Will knew that movie number two was supposed to be scarier. Hannibal sat back in his spot, and Will hesitated a moment before settling back in his, the bowl of popcorn in between them.

Ten minutes later, Will jumped as the eerie music shattered with a loud clattering sound from the loudspeakers.

'Are you scared, Will?' Hannibal asked, pausing the movie. 'I don't want you having nightmares.'

'Hannibal.' Will rolled his eyes. 'It's a scary movie. You're supposed to jump. I'm not scared…' He lifted the bowl and shuffled closer to Hannibal, so their arms were touching. 'But I could sit a bit closer in case you get scared.' He glanced up at Hannibal's face and put the popcorn on his lap, sniffing appreciatively. Hannibal always smelt really nice.

Hannibal gave a small laugh. He had a great laugh that rumbled in his chest and throat. He lightly rumpled Will's hair again. 'Yes. True. I might get scared. That's very considerate of you, Will. Thank you for looking out for me.'

'No problem. My pleasure,' Will responded. Hannibal grabbed another blanket and spread it over both of them. Will could feel his arm pressed next to him, and every time Will reached for popcorn, his elbow just about grazed Hannibal's waist, sort of, as it was under two layers of blanket but still... He was happily ensconced at Hannibal's side.

A few months later, just after Memorial Day, he got stung by a bee and hopped about until Hannibal removed the stinger, and then smoothed away curls from Will's face, kissing him gently on the forehead, thumb lightly stroking Will's cheek. Will instantly forgot the pain, his heart galloping, enthralled by the magical touch of Hannibal.

It felt like they were dating without Hannibal knowing they were dating, and Will knew he was in love. The butterflies in his stomach, the excitement of being near Hannibal. The endless daydreams. *…Hannibal surprising him and collecting him from school and tugging Will around the waist, sweeping him off his feet as he bent down to kiss him… 'Will I love you! You're the only one for me.' And Will would loop his arms around Hannibal's neck and kiss him back, 'I've always loved you,' and everyone would clap…*

Hannibal had come into his life like a miracle. They were destined to be together. Will knew it. Meant to be. Pre-ordained. He had just learnt that word at school.

One lunch break Will found a magazine left in a classroom with a quiz called "Does he like you?". Will hid it in a large chemistry book, and went to the library, finding a secluded corner and completed the quiz.

Hannibal definitely knew he existed, yes, they were friends. He was easy to talk to. Will had met some of his friends at the country club and even had lunch with them. No Hannibal didn't have a partner; he did occasionally touch Will. When he talked to Will, he always looked directly into his eyes. He always made time for Will. Gave Will his full attention. Yes, he teased Will, yes, he complimented Will all the time. If Will hugged him, he would hug back. If Will asked him to do something, yes, he was sure Hannibal would do it.

He counted his score. *He likes you! Maybe even loves you! Don't stay in the friend zone for too long or someone else might snatch him away if he is that wonderful. Make your move.*

He didn't need to be falsely modest in knowing that Hannibal was *his*. The glow of pleasure in knowing that he had a special person, made Will feel in turn very special too. The way Hannibal looked at him, his eyes so soft and swirling with affection, his fleeting touches so kind and gentle.

Will was ready to love him.

And Hannibal wanted to be loved by him too and not just as a best friend. He needed Will, just as much as Will needed him. But Will knew because of his age, Hannibal would never kiss him unless Will initiated it. Confronted him. Pressed him.

By the time he crawled towards his sixteenth birthday, he was so frustrated and desperate to tell Hannibal how he felt; he couldn't wait any longer and kissed him.

Thankfully, the stars had aligned, and he had been kissed back. He could feel the turmoil and conflict coursing through Hannibal's tense body, but he gave in. And they became each other's.

And now finally he was seventeen, and they had been together just over a year. The romance, passion, and friendship made him feel as if he was living in a dream—his best life. The days bright and beautiful because of what they were together. Hannibal was his person.

But he realised getting older meant he was spending less time with Hannibal plus the incident with Matthew Brown had shaken him. He'd only heard or read about stuff like that but never imagined it could happen to him until it was happening to him. The anger he'd felt at being touched, the red haze fuzzing his brain, causing him to snap and fight back.

He could still remember the warm blood flowing in his mouth. It should have disgusted him, but it hadn't. Instead, he felt righteous, though a nagging feeling hounded him despite Hannibal assuring him he had nothing to feel ashamed about, hurting someone who hurt you. A part of Will was uncertain if everyone would have done the same had they been in his position.

In the following weeks, their relationship shifted slightly, with lots of hugs and cuddles but no voracious kissing, or heated touches. Will was having dark thoughts of accidentally biting down on Hannibal's tongue and deliberately kept things chaste. He told Hannibal, who was ever loving and supportive and careful with him. He was confident that Will would never hurt him but understood wanting to slow things down. Patient and kind as always. He didn't make a big deal out of it, didn't get Will to talk about it if he didn't want to. Just accepted Will spending time with him whenever he could, which made Will fall even more in love with him. Hannibal was the most caring person for whom he could hope, and Will rang him every night to say goodnight, taking the phone into his room and talking in a low voice under the bed covers.

He began his new school, Etoile Durant, which was a good distraction and a fresh start. He made two friends that he spent time with a boy and girl, who initially asked why he

transferred for senior year. He had been frank and matter of fact about the incident, feeling it was better he was upfront than leave it to overactive minds. They didn't press him any further and never bothered him about dating, genuinely thinking he wasn't interested in romancing anyone at school. Which was right; he had no interest in anyone apart from Hannibal.

Meanwhile, he was getting used to having a car and driving around and didn't 'need' to go to Hannibal's as much as he used to. Only going there under the guise of homework help, where they would either cuddle up and talk or give each other foot rubs, and shoulder massages as Hannibal quizzed Will for upcoming tests.

Once or twice a month, they still went out during the day, to the movies, a bike ride, the country club. His dad invited Hannibal for Thanksgiving, and Will reached for his hand under the table every chance he got.

For Christmas and New Year's, Hannibal went to Lithuania and France, and Will missed him so much he made sure he saw him as soon as he returned and excitedly collected him from the airport. He stayed the night, telling his dad they wanted to catch up. He hadn't stayed overnight since his dad had returned last summer.

They picked up a takeaway on the way home, and after they had eaten and Hannibal had unpacked and showered, Will hugged him tight around the waist, their chests pressed together, leaving no space in-between. Hannibal's body solid and comforting, surrounding him. Will rested his head on his shoulder, his hands curling inwards, feeling every muscle and quiver under his top. Will knew Hannibal would hold him quietly like that for as long as he wanted. Stroking a hand over Will's head, bodies pressed so close; they merged.

He looked up and stared at his boyfriend's beautiful face, lips touching Hannibal's chin, Hannibal pressing soft, soft kisses on his forehead.

They hadn't kissed kissed for months, but he was finally ready for more.

He tilted his face higher, his lips parting, and Hannibal did the same. Their open mouths lightly joined, breathing each other in. It felt so good. He flicked his tongue out cautiously, licking the inside of Hannibal's mouth, dipping further in. He knew Hannibal was waiting for him to finish exploring before he kissed Will back with the slide of his tongue.

Will could hear the wet, liquid kisses as he pressed his mouth open for more. Hannibal letting him. A soft moan escaped his mouth, and Will urged him to kiss back. Their lips finally moving together, tongues slipping in each other's mouths.

'Can we get a little bit naked?' Asked Will a few minutes later.

'Are you sure?' Hannibal's large hand cupped Will's face.

'Yes,' Will whispered.

Getting undressed, but leaving their boxers on, they laid in bed facing each other, arms entwined, legs tangled. Hannibal's kisses were gentle on his skin, like being wrapped in a warm blanket. Sometimes their fingers were laced, other times exploring, a soft brush stroke

on the arm, chest, stomach. A finger gliding down a neck, across a cheek. A kiss pressed to the temple. Softly softly touching and nothing more. Skin on skin.

When Will yawned, Hannibal kissed him and rolled him on his side, wrapping his arms securely around Will's middle, pressing his chest against Will's back, their knees bent and slotted together. His face in the curve of Will's neck, warm breath skimming just so making Will shiver in delight. He felt warm and loved, sinking into a soft cloud nestled in Hannibal's arms.

It was like starting afresh. His lovely, sweet, sweet Hannibal. His entire world.

Senior year was speeding past, and he did enjoy his new school. The classes were small, the teachers challenged and encouraged, and Will occasionally went out with his friends, but again, kept his interaction with them minimal. He always picked up nonverbal signals like an antenna, and in high school, so many people were pretending to be something other than what they were, though he was getting better at shielding himself. Hannibal first explained what he often experienced as a gift and not a burden.

He had been thirteen when Hannibal first spoke to him about it. They were at a department store when they passed a crying girl aged about five or six. The shop attendant was trying to calm her down but to no avail. Will couldn't help but tune into the girl's distress and her body language, his eyes flicking towards her.

He remembered Hannibal observing him as he walked towards the girl, and the woman was patting her head, trying to speak over her.

'Hey there.' He crouched down to the little girl's eye-level. 'My name is Will. I like your doll,' he said in a soothing voice. The little girl sniffed and blinked at him several times before holding up her rag doll.

'Her name is Mamie.'

'My doggy at home is called Patches.'

The little girl nodded.

'Can you tell me your name?'

'Elsie.'

'Hi, Elsie. Are you here with your mommy or daddy?'

She nodded, knuckling her eyes. 'My mommy,' she said in a low voice. 'But I…'

'It's okay,' Will said. 'You're not in trouble. I'm going to help you. You can tell me.'

She leaned forward and whispered to Will. Will nodded, treating her words with seriousness. 'Is it okay if I tell my friends? They're grown-ups and can help? Is that okay?'

The little girl nodded, and Will held her hand as he straightened up, talking to the shop attendant and Hannibal.

‘She ate some candy from the pick n’ mix, and when she looked around, her mom had disappeared. She thinks her mom is mad at her, and that’s why she is gone.’

‘Aww sweetie,’ the shop attendant bent down. ‘We’re going to speak in a microphone that everyone can hear in the store and ask your mommy to meet us at the desk. You’re not in trouble.’

Will looked at Hannibal. ‘We can stay with her until her mom comes?’

‘Of course,’ he replied.

The shop attendant asked the main information desk to make an announcement, and Will helped Elsie speak into the mike to say, ‘mommy I’m fine. I’ll wait here with Mamie.’

A flustered mother came rushing a few minutes later, sweeping her daughter in a huge hug. She couldn’t stop saying thank you and Elsie gave Will a big smile before she walked away. The shop attendant thanked him, and Hannibal patted his shoulder as they walked out.

He asked Will why he had felt compelled to intervene, and Will explained it was instinct and how he sometimes could read people’s feeling and interpret meanings of words and body language when others seemingly couldn’t. He was especially attuned to his dad and knew when to keep quiet, when to ask for things, when to let him rest, when to leave him alone. Hannibal explained that Will had high empathy and showed an acute awareness of the emotions of people around him and put himself in their place, their way of thinking. He said it was an exceptional talent and he could help Will learn how to manage it.

His empathy gave him unique insight, and he wanted to understand it better. More recently, they discussed it as Hannibal was working towards earning a psychiatry license as well as being a practising surgeon. He spoke to Will a lot about it and said he wasn’t sure it would be a career path Will would want to follow but was supportive of him wishing to understand more about human behaviour.

It made the college application season easier, which had started with a frenzy, and all anyone spoke about. Will felt confident in his SAT scores and had worked on his college essay over the summer. He knew he wanted to study psychology. They discussed possible colleges and picked five. Hannibal thought it best if Will visited colleges with his dad (though Will wanted Hannibal to go with them).

The deadline to apply was early in the new year, and acceptance decisions would be sent by spring. Will was hoping to get into Stanford University. As he looked around the campus, his dad raved about the dorms, and Will nodded along but had no intention of living there. Will convinced him to drive around the surrounding areas, imagining living in a nice apartment or a house close to the campus with Hannibal.

Will assumed that they felt the same about the college situation, though he knew it was too early to plan and needed his acceptance letters first.

They came in April, and all five said yes. Ecstatic, he drove straight to Hannibal's, letting himself in as he still had a key. Skidding on the wooden floors, he ran upstairs.

It was Hannibal's day off, and he was in the bedroom, still in his pyjamas.

'I got in!' Will flung his arms around Hannibal's neck. 'Stanford, I'm in!'

That earned him a spine-tingling kiss. 'Of course, you got in, my love.'

Will kissed him multiple times. 'Let's send back the acceptance straight away.'

Hannibal nodded, slinging an arm around Will's shoulder, squeezing him. Will gave him the paperwork to look through as they sat down on the bed.

'Mmm, you should complete the dorm paperwork and ask for an en suite…'

'What?' Will looked at him quizzically. 'Why would I fill in that form?'

Hannibal seemed puzzled. 'What do you mean?'

'What do *you* mean?' Will frowned. 'I'm not going to live in dorms while you're like twenty minutes away or whatever. We need to start looking for houses or apartments and we—'

'Will.' Hannibal lay a hand on his knee, which caused Will's words to freeze in his mouth. 'What…' Hannibal cleared his throat. 'Wait, we need to talk about this.'

Will shot up, his heart thumping uncomfortably. 'Talk about what?'

'About you going away to college…'

'We have talked. You said yes to us living together, remember? I'll be eighteen, I'll be in college, and we can live together.' He examined Hannibal's expression. 'What's there to talk about?'

'I thought when you and your father went to look at college's he said you loved the dorms, and I assumed you would want to live on campus.'

'I never said that.' Will cried out. 'When have I ever said that?!'

Hannibal reached for Will's hand. 'Darling, listen. You're going away to college—'

'I know! And you're coming with me!' He hated his voice sounding like he was whining like a child having a tantrum, but they had talked about this. When he turned eighteen, it would all fall into place. He and Hannibal would be together, properly.

He started to walk out of the bedroom, with Hannibal following him closely behind.

'Will, hey…'

Will could feel stupid tears burn his throat, and his face was hot. Hannibal grabbed his hand, deftly pulling him back. 'Listen, let's talk.'

But Will was afraid. He didn't want to talk. He needed to stay quiet. If he pushed too much, what if Hannibal decided distance would be good for their relationship?

He shook his head. It was all falling apart. He stared at Hannibal's chest, his heart trembling.

Hannibal tipped his chin up, thumb lightly caressing his jaw. 'Stop, take a minute. Breathe.' He cradled Will's face and kissed him gently on his lips. 'I'm so proud of you. Congratulations. Be happy, love. We'll talk and figure this out. Don't be upset.'

Will swallowed, feeling a swoop of shame as Hannibal led him downstairs into the lounge.

They sat on the sofa facing each other, Hannibal still holding his hand.

'Would you like to go first?'

Will took a deep breath. 'I just thought that I would go to college and you would move there with me. We'd live together. That's it.'

Hannibal kissed his fingers.

'All right. And I… thought that you might want the full college experience—' Will opened his mouth to interrupt and then closed it letting Hannibal speak. 'After the conversation we all had when you visited the campus, you looked happy, and your father was pointing out the different dorms in the brochure. I thought that's what you wanted. And that's okay. To want that. You're young, going to university. I want you to experience it fully, Will. I don't want you missing out.'

He could feel Hannibal doing *that thing,* being all altruistic to preserve Will's goodness knows what because of his age. The same way he would never have kissed Will unless Will did it first, the same way he drew the line on facets of their sexual activity until Will turned eighteen. And now college; like Will deserved some weird cookie-cut gold-standard experience when in reality Will wanted none of that.

Will chewed his lip, his eyes dropping.

'If I move there and you're in dorms or if we live together, I don't want to get in your way. You might want to hang out with your friends, socialise at all hours. Having me there will be…different.'

Will felt tears rise again and he tried to keep them at bay. 'When have I ever been one to socialise, Hannibal? Do you really think that after all the years of high school, I'm suddenly going to change and become some mad party goer at college? When have I ever done any of that stuff?'

He sniffed, pulling his hand away. 'I want to go to college, yes, but if you're not going to come with me, then I'm staying here. I'll enrol at the local community college, I…'

'Will, no! Don't even think about it.'

‘Then don’t make me think about going away without you!’ Will cried, his eyes glistening with needy, angry tears. ‘Don’t you ever make me think about being without you! Ever.’

His heart sunk. What if Hannibal thought he was too co-dependent and clingy and wanted Will to *‘stand on his own two feet?’* But they were supposed to be partners, in love, together. Will did not need to make his way alone in the world. He had Hannibal... didn’t he? As his life partner?

‘I thought you wanted to… be with me.’ His voice broke. He felt like he was on a fault line, and the ground was cracking beneath him. He sounded like a lost child. Eyes wide, tears full threatening to spill over. He tried to blink them away. ‘Don’t you want to be with me?’

‘Oh, Will. My love.’ Hannibal’s face crumpled, and he kissed Will’s wet lashes. ‘As tave myliu. Mylimasis. I’m sorry,’ he murmured. ‘Please, no. Don’t,’ he soothed, lifting Will into the circle of his arms, pulling him onto his lap. ‘Of course, I want to be with you. How could you ever doubt that? You are my heart. How can I be separated from my heart?’

His hand cupped the back of Will’s neck, fingers curling into his hair. ‘But I need you to be sure of what you are saying. I never want to assume. You need to make your own choices, and I will be there by your side, but I want to be part of your journey, not skip ahead, having decided the outcomes. Us living together, while you are at college, will be a different experience for you and I don’t want you having any regrets.’ His thumb stroked across his cheek. ‘Do you want to consider living away for the first year, and we can discuss it further tomorrow?’

‘No,’ Will said swiftly, gripping Hannibal’s shoulders. ‘I don’t need to consider it. I know I want us to live together. We’ll find a place, and you’ll find a job. You’re brilliant, you can do anything, and I’ll go to college, and we’ll be together every day. Always.’ He met Hannibal’s eyes still feeling tearful and implored, ‘don’t make me go alone. Never without you.’

Hannibal’s face was pained for a moment, eyes closing briefly. His hand gripped Will’s face against his, kissing the side of Will’s neck, holding him tight. Will could feel their heartbeats thumping together, Hannibal’s chest trembling. Will nestled into his body, arms and legs, tucked in.

He pulled back, suddenly feeling guilty. He didn’t want to force Hannibal’s hand, not if he wasn’t comfortable. He looked deep into Hannibal’s tawny brown eyes that glowed golden brown as the sun shone through the windows.

‘But do you want that too? I don’t…’ he faltered. ‘I never want you to if you don’t want—’

‘Will.’ Hannibal hushed him with a kiss. ‘I will be wherever you will be my love. The core if you wish to burrow into the bowels of the earth. I will gladly and happily wholly be with you. Forever.’

Will could feel the emotion radiating from Hannibal and felt his heart lurch.

‘Just to Stanford,’ he whispered. ‘Not the bowels of the earth.’

Hannibal gave a throaty laugh scooping Will up and laying him down on the sofa. His long, hard body hovering over Will.

Will clutched him close, hands slipping under his top, feeling the silky-smooth skin of his back. Hannibal propped himself up on an elbow, keeping most of his weight off Will as Will kissed him, his fingers carding through the soft, dark blond strands. He loved kissing Hannibal. Feel the slight, bronze stubble against his skin, lips trailing down Hannibal's jaw, his neck. A sweet sigh, face tilting up to give Will more access as Will shifted so Hannibal was almost lying down on him.

'Darling, I'm too heavy…' Hannibal's head bowed, trying to lift himself slightly, but Will kept him near.

'No, I like it. Stay.'

He slipped his arms underneath Will, pressing them together, his lips grazing, caressing.

Will trailed his fingers across Hannibal's cheek, gazing into his eyes. 'I love you.'

He drew a finger down Hannibal's nose, the dip between, his lips, tracing the edges. His chin, going back up. Hannibal's eyes darkened as he stared back, letting himself be touched and not moving. Will knew that this side of Hannibal was just for him. No one else got to see it—the soft, sensual, sweet, sexy Hannibal. No one. Not like this.

And they kissed. And kissed. And kissed.

Will tore himself away an hour later and made his way back home.

He would send the acceptance slip back but omit the deadline for dorm applications when he spoke to his dad.

Another step closer…he was counting the days until he turned eighteen.

Chapter End Notes

Next time on 'My Everything': Will POV chapter- It's the end of High School, Will turns 18...and tells his dad about his feelings for Hannibal. My goodness.

Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

> Will POV chapter. End of high school. Will is FINALLY LEGAL. Eighteen. Gosh.
> He tells his dad and then rushes to his Hannibal where they have tender sex.
> Just assume there will be a lot of tender, smut sex from now on because these two can't keep their hands off each other. They're so fricking in love and obsessed with one another and I'm all over that.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Hurtling towards the end of the school year, all the seniors were gearing up for prom, buying tickets, finding dates. Hannibal convinced him to go with his friends as he didn't want Will *missing out*. He hired a limo for Will, and Will told his dad that he would be back the next day as there was an after-party and he would be staying the night. Of course, what he really was going to do was go to prom, dance a bit, get pictures taken and have the limo drop him at Hannibal's.

Which is exactly what happened.

'Fancy an after-hours prom date?' Will said when Hannibal opened the door and ushered him in with a grin.

'Ciao, bello ragazzo,' he said, closing the door and tugged Will towards him for a kiss.

Will could see a multi-coloured boutonniere on the hallway table and smiled as Hannibal fastened it onto his jacket. 'Sweet William's for my love.'

'Grazie,' Will said. 'Am I getting lucky tonight as it's prom night?' He wiggled his brows suggestively, and Hannibal kissed him on the nose.

'Only if you saved me the last dance,' he replied, leading Will into the lounge.

Will's mouth dropped. 'You got a disco ball?'

Hannibal had replaced the main light fixture with a mirror ball and reflected a coloured light that changed from pink to green to blue, making the whole room twinkle in a multi-coloured light show.

'I've never been to prom,' Hannibal said switching on the sound system. Taking Will's hands in his, he pulled him in close as the dreamy orchestral music began.

Will kissed him hungrily at first and then eased into soft, full kisses, his lips closing over Hannibal's so deeply, he could feel the kisses in the pit of his stomach. Nuzzling Hannibal's cheek, he gave a contented sigh and rested his head on Hannibal's shoulder. They swayed to the music, palms meeting together, fingers laced.

As the second song began, Will turned his face into the curve of Hannibal's neck. Kissing the soft skin, his mouth moved up below the ear, the jaw before kissing his beloved boyfriend softly again on his mouth. He felt every slide, every press, every lap of a sweet tongue.

'Will.' Hannibal gave a throaty moan. 'Mio caro,' he breathed.

They made out for another few songs, each kiss worshipful and soothing, and when Will felt himself start to throb, they went upstairs where he slowly undressed his Hannibal and made love to him for the third time.

By now he knew what direction to go deeper, press further, that made Hannibal groan with pleasure, body trembling. Will looked down at his face, watching for every flicker, every sound that passed those wonderful lips.

Half an hour later, Will slumped naked and sweaty on top of Hannibal. The perfect end to his senior year.

He graduated from high school a week later, with his dad and Hannibal both attending. It couldn't have come soon enough for Will, who was anxious to put his school days behind him and start the next chapter of his life.

Dad threw a barbecue to celebrate and invited a few of his friends along with Hannibal, who made a large chocolate cream and orange sponge cake. Will sneaked a thank you kiss and hug before the rest of the crowd arrived.

For a few minutes, they managed to stand next to each other, making conversation in a group, and Hannibal's index finger stroked his middle finger up and down. Will's entire existence centred around that one point of contact, and he got distracted, losing track of the chatter when his dad asked him to get more ice. Reluctantly he moved away shooting a glance to Hannibal beneath his lowered lashes. It was very challenging not to touch Hannibal for the rest of the evening, and stare at his lips every time he spoke.

Images of sitting on Hannibal's lap and feeding him cake kept a small smile on Will's face, and every time their eyes met, he knew Hannibal imagined something similar.

Will excitedly started to make plans for his eighteenth birthday knowing Hannibal had taken a week off, when his dad surprised him with a camping trip on his actual birthday for four days. Feeling initially disappointed, he then saw it as an opportunity to tell his dad.

Hannibal re-scheduled his leave for when Will returned, and Will gave him a long lingering kiss goodbye. Though he had a clumpy mobile phone, it wouldn't have reception in the woods so he wouldn't be able to ring to say goodnight. In place of that, he showered kisses on Hannibal's lips for each night away.

With a tender look, Hannibal waved him off. ‘I love you. Keep safe.’

Will felt like the luckiest boy in the world. He was so certain in his belief that Hannibal loved him completely, it was like carrying a warm ball of light inside his chest filled with the best feelings of everlasting comfort and happiness.

Camping was always fun, and Will did like fishing. He made lures with his dad, and they were going to try some fly fishing down by the river. All the while, he was a little nervous about telling his dad but kept in mind how relieved he would feel once it was finally out in the open—no more pretending. Will just had to be a bit creative on how he said it, and never felt guilty how easily the lies tripped over his tongue. They were necessary.

Even though they were always careful, a part of him was aware he could get Hannibal into trouble. He had literally counted down the days till he became a legal adult.

They were roasting marshmallows over the crackling fire on their last night, and dad was looking thoughtfully into the flames.

Will cleared his throat. ‘I want to talk to you about something.’

Dad darted Will a concerned look. ‘What is it?’

‘I’m in love.’

‘You’re what?’ His brows shot up as if that were the last thing he expected Will to say and scratched his neck awkwardly. They didn’t talk about such things.

‘I’m in love,’ Will repeated. ‘And I want to tell them and see what happens.’ He watched his dad trying to gauge his feelings.

The man looked downright confused. ‘Right, okay, but you want to tell them now before you go away to college?’

‘Yes.’

‘Is that fair? Or you’re hoping for a summer romance before you go away?’ He gave an uncomfortable laugh. Will had never talked to his dad about the ‘birds and the bees’ and dating at all and was sure his dad still didn’t think Will was interested in ‘all that’.

‘Not exactly,’ Will said slowly. ‘I’m hoping they will consider giving us a chance and see what happens…’

‘Well, I’m a bit surprised as you’ve never talked about any girl—'

‘It’s not a girl,’ Will said quickly.

Dad froze, the marshmallow on his stick burning and flopping to the ground. He leant back, and his Adam’s apple did a visible gulp.

‘A boy in your class?’ He sounded hesitant.

‘No.’

Lips thinning, Will could read the tensing of his jaw, his shoulders. He wondered if his dad suspected.

‘It’s Hannibal,’ Will said in a clear voice.

Dad blinked several times with a slightly punch-drunk look on his face. ‘Will, no…’

‘Sorry,’ he said softly. He was not trying to hurt his dad. ‘But I’m not asking for your permission. I’m telling you. I’m in love with Hannibal and have been for a very long time, and I am going to tell him.’

Dad shook his head. ‘Will, he is older than you—’

‘Ten years isn’t that much.’

‘He’s like family. Like your—’

‘Do *not* say older brother,’ Will cut in. ‘I have never seen Hannibal that way. He has always been a friend, then best friend and now the man I’m in love with.’

‘Will, slow down. Don’t you want to try dating a few girls at least…’ Dad ran a hand across his beard, stalling. ‘Or a few boys your age. I mean, are you…?’

‘Are you asking me if I’m gay or straight?’ Will raised a brow. ‘I don’t think of it like that. I’ve never given myself a label, but if you’re going to ask me, then I’m Hannibal. He is the only one I have feelings for and want to be with. I’ve never been attracted to anyone else or wanted to “date” anyone else.’

Dad frowned looking worried. ‘You’ve known Hannibal since the summer you turned thirteen. Has Hannibal… Has he ever…’ he grimaced. ‘Has Hannibal ever touched you… inappropriately?’

‘No!’ Will said hotly. ‘Don’t ever say anything like that. Hannibal has never taken advantage of me. Ever. He is the kindest most generous, sweetest man I know. He has never hurt me. He is wonderful, you know he is. Don’t ever say anything like that, ever again!’

Dad looked taken aback at the ferocity of his tone, but he could not bear Hannibal maligned or talked about in any negative way. He wasn’t naïve or stupid. By law, he knew he had been underage when they had gotten together, but Will had always been in control. Being young didn’t mean he was incapable of making choices. Hannibal had not manipulated him or taken advantage of him. If anything, Will felt like he did that to Hannibal, not the other way around.

‘Will, I understand how much Hannibal means to you, but maybe you’re confusing your feelings for him. You said he was your best friend. Maybe you’re not in love.’ He waved a hand. ‘Not in that way.’

‘I know how I feel.’ Will’s heart accelerated, a fierce feeling of protectiveness for Hannibal layering his words. ‘I have known for a long time, I’m not confused. When we get back, I’m going to tell him. He said he was going to take a few days off for my birthday so we can spend time together before I leave for college. If he lets me, I want to stay the week with him so that we can talk. I’m an adult now. I’m eighteen.’

Dad looked stunned like he’d been slapped on the face.

‘I know it’s a lot to take in,’ Will continued. ‘And you don’t know anyone else’s sons with boyfriends, but it’s okay. I promise, and I wanted you to know, I didn’t want to hide it from you.’

A troubled emotion passed over his dad’s features. ‘That…’ he began, but quickly stopped, not saying anymore.

Will regarded him for a moment. ‘That what?’

‘Nothing.’ He looked away, shaking his head vigorously as if trying to dislodge the unsaid words from his mind.

Will narrowed his eyes. ‘That… boy? You mean Matthew Brown?’

‘Will, I didn’t say anything.’ He looked upset.

‘I know,’ Will said gently. ‘But you had a fleeting thought that Matthew Brown attacked me because I like a boy?’

‘Will—’

‘It’s okay. I know, you didn’t say it out loud, and it was just a thought. I’m sure Matthew attacking me had nothing to do with me liking girls or boys.’

Dad looked flustered. ‘I know, I wasn’t going to say it. It was…’

‘It’s all right.’ Will didn’t blame him for a moment’s thought. His intuit often felt like he was invading someone’s privacy, and it wasn’t fair to judge them for something they thought better of and not said aloud. His poor dad was often a victim of that, and Will tried to keep from reading him to a minimal. Will was confident that Matthew Brown hadn’t attacked him because of that. He was a troubled boy who liked to feel powerful, plus Will looked like his ex-boyfriend so became a substitute for unresolved anger.

The conversation dwindled, and they got into their sleeping bags. Will could tell his dad was having trouble falling asleep, but there wasn’t anything Will could add that he hadn’t already said and knew he just had to give the man time to process.

The next day, his dad avoided the topic altogether, and Will accepted that. It didn’t change anything and fine if he didn’t feel comfortable discussing it any further for now.

They got back as night fell and Will phoned Hannibal as soon as he unpacked and put away the fishing gear. He asked rather loudly for the benefit of his dad’s ears if he could come over

and would it be okay to stay the week. Hannibal sounded amused as Will hammed it up.

‘You’re going *now?*’ Dad asked astonished, mouth going slack. ‘We’ve only just got back home!’

‘Yes, but I can’t wait. I need to do this.’

He packed a small rucksack and gave his dad a big hug and thanked him for the long birthday weekend. They didn’t hug one another a lot; there was a lot of love, but not physical affection. The man returned a quick hug back, looking entirely perplexed.

Feeling relieved and lighter, Will drove to Hannibal’s. No more hiding and lying.

As soon as he got through the door, he leapt up and wrapped his legs around Hannibal’s waist. Hannibal stumbled slightly with a rumble of laughter, vibrating their kiss. Will had gotten taller but was still slight of frame compared to Hannibal’s solid, lean build.

‘Mi sei mancato. See, this is why we should never be apart. Ever,’ Will said in between kisses. ‘I’m all yours for the whole week. Are you mine?’

‘Always.’

‘Are you ready? I’m eighteen now.’

Hannibal chuckled into his mouth, and Will kissed him with such force, he sat down on the stairs with Will on his lap.

Laughing, he embraced Will as Will wound his arms around his neck, brushing their noses together. ‘Yes, my King has turned eighteen, and as your loyal subject, what would my majesty like for a present?’

‘Hannibal!’ Will cried out, feeling bashful and delighted at the same time. ‘You can’t say stuff like that,’ he whispered. He couldn’t stop grinning as Hannibal looked at him affectionately.

‘Who says?’ he asked. ‘The adoration police?’

Will chortled and pressed their cheeks together as Hannibal pecked kisses.

‘I have a birthday gift in mind, but it will have to wait until we are settled.’

‘In California?’ Will asked.

‘Yes.’ Hannibal trailed his hands down Will’s back. ‘But in the meanwhile, ask me for anything.’

Will felt his heart flip and cupped Hannibal’s face with his hands.

‘I just want you. Only you.’

‘That’s all you want?’ Hannibal’s voice broke, his expression soft and tender. ‘You already have me, my darling.’

‘And that’s all I’ll ever want,’ Will replied solemnly. Hannibal winced, his eyes filling with tears and he lowered his face. Will lifted it back up gently.

‘Hannibal, please tell me, why do you get like that sometimes? What is it?’

Hannibal gave a shaky smile and pushed back a stray curl from Will’s forehead, kissing him.

‘I never thought I was capable of falling in love, I really didn’t, and I didn’t mind. I didn’t miss it, I didn’t care for it. But…’ he swallowed. ‘A few years before I moved here, I found myself receptive to the idea, although I never got to experience it. Never knew what it felt like, until you.’

His brows creased and Will could tell he was trying to control his emotions and pressed a kiss on his forehead.

‘Do you know what unconditional love is?’ Hannibal asked.

Will rubbed his thumb over Hannibal’s shoulder as he contemplated for a second.

‘Like you love someone, no matter what?’

‘Exactly.’ Hannibal kissed his mouth. ‘I love you without any conditions or expectations, no matter what. There is nothing that you could ever do that will stop me from loving you.’

‘Hannibal, I love you and always will,’ Will replied at once.

‘And that is the greatest gift I have ever had,’ Hannibal said, his knuckles gently caressing Will’s cheek. ‘I have never loved anyone as I do you, and certainly never expected to be loved so much in return. You are the best part of me, ti amo, ti adoro. I would do anything for you.’

Will felt his eyes tear up. ‘Thank you,’ he said with a small, quirky smile. Hannibal said that to him often.

‘So, Mr eighteen-year-old, what do you want to do?’

Will rocked forward, grinding on Hannibal’s lap. ‘I want you to undress me. We need to be naked right now, and for the whole week.’

Hannibal squeezed his bottom playfully and then got up with Will in his arms. ‘Undress you and be naked right now, for a whole week?’ Hannibal gave him a wicked grin, as he climbed the stairs, Will clinging onto him, nipping his ear lightly. ‘Might get a little cold.’

Hannibal pressed Will against the door as they reached the bedroom, kissing him intensely, with slow strokes of his tongue. Will whined into his mouth, eagerly kissing back, holding his face with both hands.

His heart thumped in anticipation, as Hannibal walked towards the bed. ‘I told Dad.’

‘And how did that go?’ Hannibal asked stroking the back of Will’s neck.

‘As well as it could go, and supposedly I’m spending this week telling you how *completely* in love with you I am and trying to convince you to give us a chance.’

Hannibal lowered Will onto the bed, pushing him up as he crawled between Will’s open legs. ‘Well, yes, rightly so. I might need a lot of convincing.’ Will thumped back on the mattress as Hannibal crowded over him, kissing his breath away.

That first night, Hannibal laid him naked on the bed. Spending time kissing, and licking, and sucking each nipple, shooting currents of pleasure up and down Will’s body. His hips were unable to stay flat on the mattress, as Hannibal fingered him gently, wet and slippery with lube and Will keened, the pleasure felt so great. Hannibal kept focused on task as he grazed over each hardened tip ever so slightly with a scrape of teeth. Will writhed with a continuous moan, the blood rushing below, making him swell thicker and flush a deep pink.

Slipping his finger out, Hannibal slowly stroked his length, up and down, as the climax built. Will’s breath came in short, sharp gasps as Hannibal continued to nibble on his nipples delicately and every time his tongue pressed on the tips, Will squirmed. He seriously thought he would come just from this. Hannibal tugged one gently between his teeth as he pinched the other, and Will’s orgasm toppled, washing over him, pleasant and warm.

Hannibal gentled his hand strokes until Will huffed a wobbly breath. His thumb swept over the soft skin of Will’s lower stomach, rubbing through the drops of come as he continued to keep his attention on Will’s chest, his tongue still lapping the hard tips. Will cried out as white-hot pleasure shot up and down his spine.

‘Hannibal,’ he said hoarsely, as Hannibal nuzzled his chest. Small jolts like electricity sparks zapped Will’s body, and he let out a soft sigh as Hannibal breathed the words, ‘you’re delicious, darling,’ into his skin.

He licked Will’s release from his hand and then his palm covered Will’s cheek, fingers curling over Will’s ear, lips mouthing, ‘beautiful,’ against his lips.

Will turned his face to capture Hannibal’s mouth, angling his body into the warm embrace.

‘My Will is eighteen years old.’

‘Took a long time,’ Will muttered back, and Hannibal hummed with affection. He pulled Will further into his arms, gathering him close and kissed his temple. Will snuggled his face against Hannibal’s chest, feeling the strong arms wrapped around him.

They lay like that for a while when Hannibal tilted his chin up for a kiss. ‘Be back in a minute,’ he said, getting up. He drew the blanket over Will and pulled on a robe before going downstairs.

A moment later, the bedroom lights switched off as Hannibal brought in a candlelit, small cream cake in the shape of eighteen with candles and sang “Happy Birthday” in Italian. Will, not able to hide the big goofy smile, made a wish and blew out his candles. Hannibal snapped on the bedside lamp and put the cake on the bed, pulling Will into another long kiss. Of course, Hannibal had made it himself, and it was delicious, which led to sexy fun with the cream before eating it. When they finished, Will was ready for another round, his fingers trailing down Hannibal’s body.

‘Patience.’ Hannibal caught his hand and kissed his palm. ‘We have the whole week, and I would like to take my time and treasure every moment. Will you allow me that?’

Will nodded. And so, Hannibal took his time.

The next day, Will was lying on his stomach. Hannibal gliding his fingers over Will’s skin and Will shivered despite the warm room. Every touch felt sensual, as Hannibal brushed his fingers past the back of Will’s head, through his curls, down his neck. Sweeping across his shoulders, stroking up and down his back. Will responded with a broken chuckle that morphed into a moan.

‘Sexy tickling,’ he said.

Hannibal’s long fingers traced the curves of Will’s bottom, dipping in between before mapping the rest of his body, like it was precious terrain sifting through grains of sand, ending across each foot. Will jerked with a husky giggle.

‘Tickles…’

‘Does it feel good?’ Hannibal asked, his voice low, near Will’s ear.

‘Yes.’ Will breathed.

Hannibal drew patterns up and down his arms, sketching the back of his hands that rested on the pillow.

He urged Will to turn over, and his muscles tensed, body quivering with desire as Hannibal traced his face. He tried to relax, be in the moment, but it felt so good—the anticipation. Hannibal glided over the shell of his ears, across his lips, inserting his finger inside. Will sucked it, wetting it thoroughly before it carried on tracing a wet path down his throat.

Further down, exploring the expanse of skin all over in soothing touches. Up past his ribs, and the sensitive sides of his waist and hips before skating up and circling the two sharp hard tips. A slight scrape causing Will to arch upwards, his breath uneven.

‘Beautiful, darling. Cuore mio, vita mia,’ Hannibal whispered.

Will tried to keep his eyes open, but they kept closing and not knowing exactly where Hannibal’s fingers would go next was as much as a turn-on as watching them. Hannibal’s gaze was intense, following the path of his hand and Will took a moment to look at the bowed head, the dark blond strands hiding his stunning face.

Will's eyes closed, as the fingers continued their discovery, sweeping every inch down to his feet. Each toe dotted by a finger before Hannibal spread his legs, letting his hands glide up the inside of Will's thighs before cupping him gently between his legs as he started to harden, filling with arousal. A featherlight touch over the wet pearly slit and then moving back to his stomach that quivered beneath Hannibal's touch. Will took a shuddery breath.

'Turn over, angelo mio.' Hannibal's voice was rough as if he were parched. Will's mouth felt dry too, from having it open and gasping in pleasure every two seconds. He turned on his stomach again and thought the friction would make him come too soon, so he did his best to keep still.

Hannibal kissed the back of his head, his nose buried in Will's hair, his breath hot against Will's ears and the back of his neck. The back of his shoulders. Being kissed. It felt so good, spine tingling good. Will couldn't stop trembling, goose bumps across his skin. His mouth was open, ecstatic moans escaping. His body reacting to every touch, every kiss. The tiny fine hairs standing on end, as lips followed the same path the fingers had taken.

Hannibal laid gentle kisses over Will's bottom, which he parted slightly and tongued a wet stripe making Will jolt. A throaty laugh as his lips moved down, skimming Will's thighs, all the way down to kiss the backs of his feet.

Will let out a soft whine, hands bunching the pillow as he buried his face in it. 'Oh my god…'

'Turn around,' Hannibal whispered, his voice sounded thick with lust. Will flipped onto his back, his face hot.

Their eyes met, and Will was riveted by the look of sheer devotion and desire on Hannibal's face. Will huffed a shallow breath with a dazed smile. No one ever looked at him the way Hannibal did. Nor did he want anyone to. Hannibal looked at him as if he were the only person worth looking at, and Will felt the same way. This kind of love was an addiction, too much to comprehend, so wrapped up in one another that nothing else existed. Will felt like his life started when Hannibal had entered it.

'Are you okay, darling?' His brown eyes were smouldering, and Will felt captivated.

He nodded mutely as soft lips pressed against his, and Will desperately held on, bringing Hannibal's face close as possible. Thirsty, wet, sloppy kisses as Will connected their mouths.

'I'm not finished yet,' Hannibal's kiss curved into a smile.

'I know.' Will kissed him. 'Just needed you.'

'I'm right here, mon amour,' Hannibal said, kissing Will's eyelids, his nose and then a gentle kiss on his lips again as Will leaned into it. Pleasure coiling in his stomach.

The kisses continued down his body, punctuated with an occasional lick, a small puff of air.

Will felt utterly drunk. Not that he'd ever got drunk really, but he imagined this is what it might be like. Soaked in a pleasured stupor, incoherent, he was having an out of body experience.

Hannibal trailed his mouth down his stomach, kissing his hips and down his legs with tickling pecks across his feet.

Will gave a breathless laugh watching Hannibal's muscles ripple, and the beauty of his face. Their eyes locked before he bent his head and kissed Will's straining length, sucking the tip lightly, lapping the wet head. Will bucked and tried to hold still.

'Hannibal… I don't want to come yet…'

'Are you sure?' Hannibal crooned lovingly, rubbing his cheek against the throbbing heat. His hand fondled below, and Will whimpered as Hannibal inhaled deeply and kissed him all over between his legs.

'Hannibal…' Will cried out.

'Okay.' He moved his mouth away as Will tried to get control over his impending climax. Just put it off… for a bit longer.

Hannibal put pillows under his hips, raising them. He bit his lip as Hannibal kneeled between his legs, bending his knees, parting them as his bottom lifted. 'Is this all right?' he asked.

'Yes,' Will said. Not sure what Hannibal was asking or going to do but yes anyway.

Hannibal's cheeks were tinged red and looked as affected as Will. Will didn't know much about eroticism, but this was so sexy, his brain felt like mush.

Hannibal's head lowered, as he grasped the back of Will's knees, his hands on his thighs, lifting him higher, right against Hannibal's face. He had never had his legs so wide apart before, air touching every part of his bottom that was spread open. And then Will felt Hannibal's mouth, firmly pressed right there. Breath stuttering as Hannibal licked him and then kissed him, his tongue lapping between.

Will squirmed at the new sensation, his shoulders digging into the mattress as Hannibal lifted his lower body up for more contact.

'Oh jeez…fuck.' Will couldn't help but swear. 'Sorry, I just…oh my god. Fuck.'

He couldn't see Hannibal's face, but his tongue was getting more insistent until it pushed in gently and Will let out a squeak, followed by garbled groans. It felt so intimate and explicitly sexual, smudging the lines of 'regular sex' with pornographic hotness. Hannibal's wet and slippery tongue working its way inside his body was almost too much to handle.

'Hannibal…' He could not breathe. He reached up, his hands curling above into the pillow as Hannibal licked more moist kisses followed by his tongue pressing in as far as it could go and then back out. In and out. The realisation that Hannibal was making out with his bottom was mind-blowing.

Will felt a shock of pleasure up and down his body, and he was so close.

‘Hannibal...’

His back lifted off the bed, his body taut tight. He didn’t know what he was asking for, but it was too much sensation, he didn’t know how to process it—the delayed climax hurtling forward. Hannibal lowered him back down, Will’s legs somehow over his shoulders and wrapped a slick hand over Will’s erection, while his tongue thrust in again.

Will gasped and spurted. Hard. Instinctively, Hannibal stroked Will firmly up and down, fast, letting the orgasm rip through, extending it. It felt like he was coming for ages and Hannibal didn’t cease his ministrations until Will let out a ragged moan, completely spent. His muscles clenched around Hannibal’s tongue, quivering under his mouth.

Will lay exhausted, seeing stars if that was such a thing. He laughed dimly and held a hand to his forehead.

‘Ouch, I have a headache…’

Hannibal took away the pillows and cuddled Will in his arms.

‘Too much?’ he asked. Will blushed at the sight of his red lips, and where they had just been.

‘People French Kiss down there?’ he asked in an awed voice.

‘Yes, they do.’

‘Is there anywhere you haven’t put your tongue?’ Will’s face felt like it was steaming.

‘Here,’ Hannibal laughed and slithered his tongue in Will’s ear. Will beamed squirming away. ‘Here,’ Hannibal licked his nose.

He giggled, overcome with emotion, his heart hammering. Hannibal smoothed his hair from his face, kissing him.

‘Thank you, Will…for letting me. So patient and sweet my love, thank you.’

Hannibal picked up his hand, kissing his palm.

‘I trust you, Hannibal.’ Will said and meaning it entirely. ‘With my whole self. I know you’ll never hurt me.’ Hannibal knew his body better than he did, and he entrusted it to the man he loved completely.

Hannibal’s eyes flashed with tears as he rested his cheek against Will’s palm.

‘I’ll never hurt you, Will. Ever.’

Hannibal had taught him to be confident in his body, and he was never embarrassed by his nakedness or being pleasured and enjoying himself. Although today had been next level, and he felt totally loved, spoiled, and desired.

Hannibal stretched beside him, pulling the covers over them. Will snaked his arms around his waist, squeezing him tightly.

‘I want to do that to you…I want to do everything to you,’ Will said.

‘Tomorrow it’s your turn, how’s that?’

Will nodded eagerly and moved on top of Hannibal’s body, laying on him.

‘I can’t believe people do things like that. Like this. Sex is amazing!’

Will kissed him passionately. He absolutely could not wait till tomorrow. Finally, being able to touch Hannibal, taste him, make him shudder with pleasure, hear him moan and groan.

Being an adult definitely had its perks.

Chapter End Notes

Meta to dad: 'You really didn't know?'
Dad: Well *err umm* not sure, not really, well...

Next time on 'My Everything': Final Will POV chapter. A life changing event and the end of summer.

Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

Final Will POV. Tender smutty sex and Hannibal finally gets *inside* His Will.
Plus, Will makes a BOLD proposal.
Hope you enjoy it!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

As promised, Will went all out the next day, and Hannibal did not last as long as Will did. At all. He came twice, in long spurting ropes and Will felt heady with power and lust. To hold Hannibal when he was fully aroused, hot, and heavy in his hands. The shape of him, the taste of him. Will was very enthusiastic about putting as much as he could in his mouth, and Hannibal kept trying to ease out, but Will wouldn't let him. He made sure to make a real feast of it and judging by Hannibal's cries; he was doing something right. It took a while for Hannibal's shaking body to calm down, and they both wheezed with breathless laughter as Will teased him.

'You've had a lot more time to get used to this.' Hannibal grinned, without a trace of awkwardness. 'This is the first time you're touching me. I can't help it. See what you do to me?'

Will kissed him and cackled, baring his teeth wickedly. 'You'll just have to keep coming until I'm done.' Hannibal visibly shivered at these words.

True to his statement, Will tried different techniques of how to drive Hannibal crazy with pleasure. His tongue alongside two fingers wriggling inside, or lewdly slurping him like a lolly, while his fingers slid in and out. He tried lots of combinations, and Hannibal couldn't move once Will was done with him.

'You kept me hungry for so long,' Will said, sitting astride the back of Hannibal's thighs and bent down to press kisses on his bottom. He stroked the beautiful curves, nuzzling and sucking gently every now and again.

'You're so yummy.' He lasciviously licked a strip up Hannibal's warm back and nibbled on the side of his neck. Hannibal was facedown, his weak moan muffled by the pillow. He turned his sweaty face to the side, and Will stroked his cheek, smoothing his hair back. A gentle kiss on the lips was returned with surprising fervour. He stretched out on top of Hannibal's body, sliding his hands underneath as he rested his face comfortably on Hannibal's back.

‘This is nice,’ Hannibal murmured, and they both fell asleep with smiles on their faces, blissfully tired.

Will felt very grown-up when they bathed together, sat in bed naked, eating breakfast—throwing on a robe to go downstairs for food and drinks and racing back upstairs. Is this what a honeymoon felt like? All thoughts of the outside world completely gone.

He caught Hannibal sketching him and eagerly looked at the soft strokes of the pencil, the shadows, the light on Will’s sleeping face. Delighted, Will flipped through more pages, and found more sketches of himself. Sitting on the beach, at the country club, smiling, reading a book, on and on. Pages of Will.

‘Are you completely brilliant?’ Will smothered him with doting kisses, feeling awed and honoured that Hannibal would want to draw him and preserve him on paper.

The next day, Hannibal surprised him with an assortment of four sex toys, dildos, in various sizes. The largest one was almost the same size as Hannibal, and Will snorted.

‘What is that for?’ He pointed, picking one up that looked only slightly bigger than Hannibal’s finger.

Hannibal grinned at his amazed expression. ‘I don’t want to hurt you, so we’ll build up to it. Your body needs time to adjust.’

‘With these?’ Will couldn’t stop laughing, picking up a black glittery one.

Freshly showered, and naked, Will unashamedly half lay half sat by the edge of the bed, his head comfortably propped up on a pillow, knees bent wide open. Hannibal kneeled in between, caressing Will’s thighs with his warm hands. Will shuffled, and his bottom slipped lower, opening his legs wider. Hannibal kissed his mouth and then his lips travelled downward to kiss Will’s inner thighs before getting off the bed.

Will snickered as Hannibal sat on a chair beside him.

‘Dr Lecter, I’m ready for my medical exam,’ he said naughtily, and Hannibal shook his head, laughter crinkling his eyes as he caught Will’s lips in a sultry kiss.

But the laughter stopped as Hannibal’s finger massaged, circled, and pressed inside, and Will felt open with lube. One finger ever so slowly turned into two. Pressing and moving deeper, making Will feel shivery and hot. His hips wriggled as he hardened, all the blood flowing to a central point. His eyes widened as Hannibal bent his head and sucked him deep into his mouth, making him come. He hadn’t been expecting that so soon.

Barely having time to breathe, Hannibal kissed him, his tongue licking into Will’s mouth making him faintly moan as he tasted his own come. Another soft moan as Hannibal slipped his fingers out and kissed him. ‘Relax, darling,’ he said, stroking Will’s thighs again. ‘It’ll be easier if you’re relaxed.’

‘I’m very relaxed.’ Will huffed as Hannibal reached for the smallest toy, coating it with lube. He couldn’t help but giggle and took a few deep breaths settling back.

‘Okay?’

Will nodded.

With almost agonising slowness, Hannibal circled the toy around and around before pressing in. Will’s mouth was open as he gave himself up to another new sensation. Feeling it move inside him, stiffer than a finger. Hannibal cradled his head with one hand, his lips sliding over Will’s mouth as his other hand moved between his thighs. Will let it move in easily, not tensing and wanted to try the next one.

There was so much lube inside him, he chortled. ‘Darlin’ you can skate inside me I’m so slick.’

‘Charming,’ Hannibal said, as Will tried to open his legs wider.

‘Are you just gonna…’ He tried to breathe through it. It felt so good. Didn’t hurt at all. ‘You’re gonna… fuck me like that...with…’ He gasped. ‘Sorry, but it is fucking. You’re not exactly making love to me with a dildo!’ He snickered again and then moaned as it hit a particularly good spot inside. ‘Hannibal…next one.’

‘Will, patience. Take it slow.’

‘I *am* taking it slow.’ Will groaned, his mouth felt dry with all the moaning. ‘Please, go faster.’ His moans were sucked into Hannibal’s mouth as they kissed.

He couldn’t imagine what he must look like, wanton, spread out, and fucked with a sex toy. The image sparked fresh excitement, and he looked down, seeing Hannibal’s hand moving between his legs. His hips stuttered, and he was so hard again.

With the third one, Will could feel it more as it was bigger, and Hannibal was so careful, and he was so wet inside, with muscles relaxed, it slid in further. Minutes passed, with the sounds of his moans and gasps, as Hannibal kept the motion going not stopping. Their faces pressed together, lips side by side. Hannibal could hear every sound he made. He groaned, his hips rocking, reaching for a delicious scratch that needed to be itched.

‘Do you want…’ Hannibal slowed his movements, looking pointedly at Will’s erection that was straining to be touched, dripping pearly white.

‘Not yet,’ Will puffed. ‘Please, just keep going.’

He was sure one touch would make him shoot, but he didn’t want to come. Not yet.

Sweat broke over his body, and he was tingling. ‘Let’s try the last one.’

‘Will, we should take it slow. I don’t want to hurt you.’

‘Hannibal, no, I need it.’ Something was stirring. ‘Please.’ He really needed something…

‘Are you sure?’

‘Yes, please.’

Hannibal got the last one wet, slick, and pressed slightly in and then back out, going in a little further each time. He was watching Will for any sign of pain, but it felt so good. Will’s neck tilted back in Hannibal’s arm as he sighed, his hips rolling with the thrusts.

He reached behind Hannibal’s neck, kissing him vigorously and then let out a broken moan against his lips. ‘So good, it feels so good. Faster please.’

Hannibal responded, with steady strokes, swift and strong. Will kept arching up every time it pulled out slightly and drove back in, rubbing deeper inside. His breath was quickening, and he could feel the waves of orgasm lifting his entire body.

‘Oh, fuck, Hannibal I’m gonna come…’ It felt unlike anything he’d experienced before. He was so heavy with want and need, so full.

‘Let it darling, let go. Let it happen. Don’t fight it, let it take over.’ Hannibal’s husky voice whispered in his ear, and Will couldn’t help his hips lifting off the bed, swaying to meet the thrusts.

Suddenly he felt a hot flush spin his mind and explode in his chest as he came so forcefully, like a firecracker splitting apart. His neck tensed and he let out a long howl as Hannibal kept a steady pace in and out. Will squeezed his eyes closed, riding out the crashing pleasure engulfing him. He was so hot like he had fallen into a steam bath. His heart was trying to thump out of his chest as the blood pounded in his ears.

The top of Will’s lip was sweating, his hairline beaded with sweat, a film of sweat on his chest, shoulders and back. He was sticking to the bedsheets.

‘You’re breath-taking, Will. My god,’ Hannibal rasped with an entranced expression.

Will tried to steady his breaths. ‘Fuck.’ He trembled, and his cheeks were on fire. Hannibal was also breathing fast as he held Will, soothing him, looking dishevelled and just as hot and sweaty as Will.

It felt like a long time for the tremors to subside.

‘What the…. that was.’ He looked down at himself and groaned almost painfully. ‘Why am I still hard?’

‘You had a whole-body pure orgasm that doesn’t always soften you.’ He kissed Will between his brows and Will shuddered, making an inarticulate sound. ‘Only fortunate souls get to experience them.’

Hannibal started to take the toy out slowly, but Will stopped him.

‘No, leave it in for a sec. I want to get used to it.’

Hannibal's lips twitched. 'You know I won't be able to stay that hard for that long, yes?'

Will laughed quietly. 'I know.' Even though he couldn't imagine another climax, his hips jerked, as Hannibal delicately touched the flushed, wet throbbing head.

'Want some help with that?'

Will took a deep breath and nodded. 'Your mouth, please. But gently…' he was feeling hypersensitive, and every touch felt raw but so good.

'Always. Softly, gently,' Hannibal said. He lowered his head and slowly sucked Will tenderly, but his orgasm still hurtled through him, ferociously down Hannibal's throat. He cried out, caught in helpless rapture, sure he had never made this much noise before.

Hannibal swallowed heavily with his eyes closed, and Will watched him dazed. He had come a lot. All in Hannibal's mouth. When Hannibal opened his eyes, he caught Will's eye and grinned.

'That was quite a mouthful,' he said, smacking his lips, and Will felt his cheeks smart.

'Sorry,' he began to say. 'I could—'

Hannibal silenced him with a kiss, tilting his head, so their lips slotted together, and sucked Will's tongue in.

'You are absolutely delicious. I love it,' his voice was gravelly as Will whimpered against his mouth, his hips stirring, feeling the heavy weight inside of him still.

Hannibal drew back and carefully removed the toy, putting it to the side. He wiped Will and got on the bed, ducking his head between Will's legs, his large hands spreading him open and kissing him.

'Just checking.'

Will laughed weakly, pliant, and exhausted, as Hannibal stroked something wet outside and nudging in slightly, before moving back. It smelt faintly medicinal but sweet.

'How do you feel?'

Will stretched his legs out. 'Amazing.'

'Sore?'

Will shook his head. 'No, but I can feel I've been *fucked*....' His voice dropped. 'You wanna give me the real thing in a little while?' He was still catching his breath but felt a delightful thrill in having Hannibal inside of him.

But Hannibal shook his head. 'Sorry, came two dildos ago.'

Will swatted his arm, and Hannibal smirked, slipping a wet finger inside Will's mouth. Will sucked it, tasting Hannibal's release. 'Mmm, you really did.'

Hannibal laughed, 'I couldn't help it. The faces you were making, the sounds. Honestly, you really thought I would last.'

'You're like a sex god.' Will said, his fingers stroking Hannibal's chest admiringly. 'Has it always been like this for you?' He knew Hannibal obviously had sexual partners before him but didn't feel jealous. Hannibal was with him now.

'Trust me when I say, I have never had sex like this before. With anyone.' He kissed Will sweetly, holding his head like he was precious, his lips moving over Will's reverently. 'You are so sensitive and responsive. It's us. Together. You are amazing. None of them matter, none of them exist. They are all forgotten, my love. There is only you.' He licked Will's lips before dragging his mouth across Will's cheek. 'You are the best sex I have ever had, ever. No comparison. Nothing even comes close. Trust me, darling.'

'Okay,' Will said gleefully, feeling very happy. He believed Hannibal and felt very proud to be the best he'd ever had, even with his lack of experience. But he was learning fast and planned to make Hannibal feel good and satisfied every time.

They cuddled for a few minutes before Hannibal ran them a bath. Will decided that having baths with Hannibal was one of life's greatest joys. Sitting between his long legs and leaning back against his solid chest with his arms hugging around him tightly. Complete and utter bliss.

In the morning, Will couldn't keep his hands off Hannibal. Slipping his arms around his waist and pressing his face against his back as he made breakfast. Fingers tracing his forearm and holding his hand as they ate, lips seeking kisses. The need for skin to skin contact throughout the day. He was immersed in the power of their love and sex.

For dinner, Hannibal made him a beautifully presented birthday meal, that looked like it belonged in a magazine spread. The table was laid out with candles and flowers, but Will was unable to take his eyes off Hannibal's lips as he chewed, his hands as he used his cutlery.

Hannibal looked like he was blushing when Will whispered, 'you're so beautiful. I want you.'

Eyes smouldering, Hannibal chased him upstairs to the shower, where they washed each other in-between kisses.

Again, Hannibal prepared Will carefully with lube. One, two, three fingers sliding in easily before he fucked Will for a few moments with the two larger toys again.

'Enough already,' Will fidgeted. He didn't want to come like that again…not right now. He wanted Hannibal and beckoned him in between his legs, parting them wider, reaching for his hand. 'Make love to me, please.'

Will had been waiting a very long time for this, and his heart pounded with nervous anticipation. The unadulterated look of devotion and love on Hannibal's face filled Will with

wonderment; he didn't feel worthy of such sentiment. He really thought he was quite ordinary, but Hannibal made him feel like he could dance on water and create rainbows with a flick of his fingers.

Winding his arms around Hannibal's neck, they kissed repeatedly, kisses everywhere. Hannibal's powerful body was smooth and soft as it surrounded him, blanketing him, it was intoxicating.

He positioned himself between Will's legs, and Will could feel his hard, slick length pressing against his entrance. Nudging slightly and then around and rubbing outside before nudging again. He relaxed his muscles, drawing his knees towards his chest, laid bare to give Hannibal more room. A slight press in and Will let out a stream of desperate moans, bucking up as he encouraged Hannibal to push in. Hands clutching his shoulders, Will pulled him close and felt Hannibal breach his entrance and start to slide in. He felt so big and hot, pulsing with heat as he pushed inside. Slowly, gently, and so full. Will felt himself opening, giving way, making room for Hannibal.

He sucked in air sharply as his neck arched and Hannibal sank deeper inside his body. Hooking his legs around Hannibal's waist, his hips rose up and down as Hannibal rocked further and further into him. Syncing to the rhythm. He was all the way in, and Will clenched, as Hannibal moaned hot against his face.

'Will…' Hannibal breathed. 'As tave dievinu. Grazie tesoro.'

He started to move faster, and Will gripped behind his neck, staring into his eyes. Not willing to miss a moment of their bodies joined this way, he was filled with emotion, overwhelmed; tears burning.

'Are you okay?' Hannibal slowed down, and Will jerked up into him.

'Don't stop. I'm fine. I just didn't know it would feel this way,' he said awed. So raw, visceral, and real. It felt so real. 'I love you. I love you so much. Hannibal, Hannibal, Hannibal. Faster, please.' Speeding his hips up, his breaths turning into a litany of moans and murmurs of feels good, yes, yes.

Hannibal complied, steadying himself on his elbows, panting with the intensity of their movements.

'Will, darling. My love.' Sweet nothings and everything's whispered. 'As tavo. Visi tavo.'

The inferno finally shattering into release as his body trembled and Hannibal came inside him, pulsating. The wet scorch felt so intimate and sacred, the idea of Hannibal buried in his body and leaving a part of him behind like a secret. Though he had done it to Hannibal, he didn't know it would feel so remarkable, the act of loving Hannibal so much and have this instant last forever, engraving it in his memory.

Hannibal was saying something, as his elbows buckled and his head bowed on Will's chest, but Will was floating in a pleasured haze. He stroked the soft blond hair, pressing a kiss

amidst the silky strands. His legs still hooked around Hannibal, not willing to let go, keeping him inside.

‘I don’t want to wait,’ Will said, his heart soaring.

‘For what?’ Hannibal lifted his head, dark eyes probing.

Will’s eyes filled with desperate tears, and he did not want to be the guy who cried during sex, but he needed to tell Hannibal.

‘I don’t want to wait four more years,’ he said as Hannibal’s hand cupped his cheek. ‘I’ve been in love with you for four years already. I can’t wait four *more* years to marry you.’

Hannibal looked speechless.

‘Please don’t make me wait. Please can we get married? Now please. Be my husband, please.’ There were better ways to propose, but Will felt compelled to seize the moment.

‘Will…’ Hannibal’s brows pinched. His expression was apprehensive and stunned. ‘Darling, you’ve just turned eighteen—’

‘Exactly,’ he said frantically. ‘I’m old enough to get married. Please, don’t you want to be married to me?’

‘Of course, I do.’ Hannibal lifted himself up. ‘But are you sure you don’t want to wait until you’re older?’ He brushed his face against Will’s, thumb stroking his jaw, his words pressed against his skin. ‘We’ll be living together. We will be together…’

‘Then we can be married together,’ Will said firmly, turning his face to look at him properly. ‘We can go now and elope to Las Vegas and tell Dad when we come back.’

Hannibal huffed a self-deprecating laugh. ‘Do you know what your father must be thinking of me already? And I bring back his eighteen-year-old son married?’

Will shook his head vehemently. ‘It won’t matter. It’s for us, not for anyone else. Please let’s do it, let’s just go. Get married.’ He kissed Hannibal with an intensity that stole his breath. Savage kisses not giving him a chance to even speak. ‘Marry me, Hannibal, please.’

Hannibal looked like he was holding his breath, overcome. He was still half laying on top of Will, his lower body nestled in between Will’s legs.

Will held his face in both his hands, locking eyes. ‘Will you marry me?’ His voice was steady. He wanted this more than anything, to be with Hannibal. Never to be separated. ‘Please marry me Hannibal Lecter. Let me become yours forever.’

Hannibal’s emotions battled across his face; his liquid dark eyes concerned as his breath heaved. ‘Are you sure, Will? This is what you want? Are you certain?’

Will nodded. ‘Yes, every day, all day, always, yes, yes. I want to marry you.’

Hannibal shifted, slipping out of Will's body and onto his knees. He pulled Will easily onto his lap, kissing him fervently. Will's arms latched around his neck, elbows crowding his face against his. With no space between, heartbeats and lips joined.

'Taip, vesiu tave, Will. Aš tave vesiu. Vivo per te. Farei qualunque cosa per te. Si.' Hannibal kissed Will, his breath hot and mingling with Will's. 'I will marry you, my darling, Will. My love, always. Yes. Be happy, angel. Be happy. Always. Anything for you. Yes.'

And they kissed and kissed and made love again, holding hands, wrapped in each other.

The next morning, Will raced home, frantically looking for his birth certificate in his room.

'What are you doing, Will?' His dad came out of the bathroom, drying his hands on a towel.

Will got a small suitcase and started to throw in some clothes. 'We're going away for a few days, Dad.'

'What?' His dad said. 'Will, don't you think you should slow down?'

'No,' Will said. 'Hannibal is going to give us a chance, and we're going to go away to spend time together. Away from here. Please be happy for me. He is everything I could ever hope for and beyond.'

Dad looked at him astounded, struggling to form words. 'I'm going to ring Hannibal. I need to talk to him.'

'Fine,' Will said. He searched for his papers in his bottom drawer with the college application paperwork. His driving license had a photo ID, but he really wanted to get a passport, which he could soon with his new name. Excitement flared inside him as he closed the suitcase.

Giving his dad a quick hug. 'Love you, bye.' He was out of the door before his dad tried to talk him out of it.

When he reached Hannibal's house, Hannibal was standing on the porch, with a quirky smile, hands in his pockets.

'Just came off the phone with your father.'

'Yup, he was gonna call you. What happened?'

'It's okay, we talked.' Hannibal said, taking the small suitcase from Will and kissing him. 'I told him his errant son seduced me, and I found myself powerless against his wily ways, so am whisking him away for a weekend of depraved sex.'

Will raised his brows because it could *almost* be the truth.

They caught an afternoon flight to Las Vegas the next day, and Will was vibrating with delight all the way there. Shooting heated glances towards Hannibal, they held hands only letting go when they had to.

The five-star hotel honeymoon suite was spacious and opulent, and Will shed his clothes in record time. Hannibal was watching him in amusement as he was pulled into the hot tub for magnificent jacuzzi sex before they fell asleep on the lush bed in each other's arms; sated and happy.

In the morning, Will bounced out of bed, up for once before Hannibal. Ordering breakfast, he lovingly fed his sleepy fiancé waffles with strawberries and whipped cream with eager fingers. Lots of kisses later, they showered, and Will led a smiling Hannibal down the corridor, towards the lifts. Hannibal kept silent as Will took charge, declaring they were getting a marriage license and directed the limo driver to take them straight to the bureau.

Filling the paperwork in the lobby, they then had to wait. Will's foot tapped impatiently, as he took in the other couples with coat hanger grins and whispered words of adoration to each other. He and Hannibal were the same, and he absorbed all the love and happiness feeling delighted.

When he was handed the license, he held it like it was a rare, precious document. Hannibal cupped his jaw tenderly and kissed his mouth. 'Happy?' he whispered, and Will nodded, kissing him back in earnest.

Hannibal wanted to go to Tiffany's to get wedding rings, and they chose a simple gold narrow band with a small flat surface on which they engraved each other's initials. Seeing the HL on his ring made Will lightheaded with joy like he was in a fairy tale reserved for dreams only. They got a pair of matching gold cufflinks with their initials engraved to wear with their suits; Hannibal wanting to wear formal wear, but forgoing ties as Will said they were itchy.

Purchasing two suits, shirts and shoes, they went back to the hotel to eat lunch, which Will insisted on feeding to Hannibal, while they chose a chapel from all the leaflets they had picked up.

Will wanted the one that looked like a forest, with a non-religious ceremony and wedding officiant. Hannibal phoned and reserved the next slot available, in one hour and requested a violinist, cellist and pianist to play the background song which Will wasn't familiar with.

Giddy with exhilaration, Will couldn't stop kissing Hannibal as they got dressed.

'I want to take your name,' Will said. He put his shoes on and stood up, gazing at Hannibal as he did up his laces.

'And I want to take yours, beloved,' Hannibal took Will's hand. 'How about Hannibal Lecter-Graham?'

'Really?' Will couldn't help but feel humbled as the words were said out aloud. 'I'll be Will Lecter-Graham then.'

'Sounds wonderful,' Hannibal said. He tilted Will's face up for a quick kiss before straightening his collar and suit jacket and fastening the cufflinks. They both looked at their reflections, Hannibal looking debonair and Will thought he looked smart, but his hair was very curly though Hannibal seemed to like it.

‘Beautiful.’ Hannibal wound an arm around his waist and kissed the side of his head.

‘You are,’ Will said softly gazing back at the mirror.

The short limo ride got them to the chapel on time, and before Will had a chance to be impatient, they were ushered inside. Suddenly, the enormity of what they were about to do made Will stop at the door. He would be a married man when he came back out of this room.

Hannibal’s brown eyes were soft and full of love. ‘Are you sure you want to do this?’

‘More than anything,’ Will said. ‘Are you?’ He wanted to doublecheck he wasn’t pushing Hannibal into this.

‘Yes, Will I am.’

Will kissed Hannibal once, twice, three times before they went in hand in hand.

It looked lovely, fairy lights and candles and Will forced the swell of tears down. He really couldn’t start crying already as the music began.

The officiant welcomed them, and Hannibal placed their rings on a velvet cushion on the table.

Will couldn’t remember what was said, as he stared at his soon to be husband. The feeling of being complete and so happy was more than he dared. To marry this wonderful man.

The officiant turned to look at Will first.

Will’s mouth went dry as Hannibal smiled at him, tears glistening in the gilded brown eyes.

Will slipped on Hannibal’s wedding ring.

‘I want to say that I love you.’ He said in a tremulous voice, and Hannibal squeezed his hands gently. ‘That I can’t believe that you’re here, in my life, with me. I promise to look after you and love you every day. You make me so happy…’ His throat clogged and he sniffed, a tearful laugh escaping as Hannibal mouthed, I love you.

‘I will stand by your side every day, forever. Together, always. You’re my best friend.’ Hannibal stroked a thumb over his cheek, and he hadn’t realised that he was crying. Shaking his head, he sniffed again, focusing on his almost-husband.

Hannibal slipped on Will’s wedding ring and stroked his hands before bringing them to his lips for a worshipful kiss.

He had to clear his throat several times before he spoke. ‘Will, you may not believe it, but I used to be a man of many words. I was never short of what to say, always ready but since you…’ He closed his eyes and Will could see him fighting back the tears. Will gripped his hands, his thumbs stroking over Hannibal’s wrists.

‘I am rendered speechless more often than not, by your beauty and kindness and brilliance. Your ability to love with your whole heart, to be so present in everything you do. Your fullest attention in just being and I am so honoured that you have chosen to love me. It’s a gift and privilege that I cherish every day. I will never take you for granted. Never take us for granted. I’m undeserving of you but will do everything I can to make you happy. Every day, Will.’

He choked up, and the tears that were lingering in his eyes slipped down his face.

Will laughed through a film of happy tears. ‘Don’t start, you’re gonna start me off.’

‘Sorry,’ Hannibal chuckled as Will stepped closer, and wiped his tears, kissing the side of his face several times before a polite cough caught his attention.

He drew back, and Hannibal laughed, kissing Will’s hand again.

‘Sorry, carry on,’ Hannibal said to the officiant, who smiled at them indulgently.

‘By the power of the state of Nevada, I pronounce you both husbands, Will and Hannibal Lecter-Graham. You can now kiss each other.’

Will instantly flung his arms around Hannibal’s neck, both their faces wet with tears, tasting them as they kissed and kissed. Finally drawing back, they looked bashful as the officiant grinned widely at them.

Will stared at his wedding ring. ‘Can’t believe we’re married,’ he said in breathless wonder.

‘Happy, Will Lecter-Graham?’ His husband asked.

‘The happiest.’

They posed for a few photos and waited for them to develop before going back to the hotel, kissing ravenously in the back of the limo.

As they neared their room, Hannibal said, ‘wait, wait,’ and swept up Will bridal style in his arms.

Will chortled.

‘You’re lighter than me,’ Hannibal said and kissed Will which he answered with enthusiasm.

Entering the hotel suite, Will’s mouth opened in surprise as Hannibal lowered him. Rose petals adorned the floor, all the way down the corridor into the lounge and bedroom.

There were balloons, a wedding cake, dozens of red roses and what looked like champagne in an ice bucket with two flutes on the side.

‘When did you do this?’ Will turned to his husband amazed, (he had a husband now).

‘It was tricky, but I managed to arrange it when you were in the bathroom.’

Hannibal slipped his arms around Will, his chest pressed firmly against Will's back, head nuzzling his neck. 'It is our wedding day, after all, seems right to commemorate it with a few romantic gestures.'

'I love it,' Will said. He opened the bedroom door as rose petals trailed the floor and up on the bed, covering the king-size covers.

Will tugged him inside and hurriedly began to slip off Hannibal's jacket.

'We need to have to have married sex right now, Mr Hannibal Lecter-Graham.'

'Of course,' Hannibal said.

Will was looking forward to tender, making love sex, but right now he wanted Hannibal laid back on the bed, naked and ride him. Soothe the insatiable need to have him. Getting out a well-used bottle of lube, he slicked Hannibal quickly and then slipped two fingers inside of himself for the first time, making sure he was wet and ready.

Leaving his husband dumbstruck, he sank down inch by inch until he was sat astride Hannibal, knees pressing in against his thighs. It felt different this way, more primitive somehow. He gave himself a few moments to adjust to the fullness, experimenting with a slow rock.

'Okay?' Hannibal asked, and Will nodded. Making sure it wasn't painful and just crazy good; he started to move.

Hannibal's neck stretched back, his hands on Will's hips as Will rode him hard and fast like he was trying to win a race, both gasping for breath.

Will wanted to have sex in every position he had fantasised about.

Alternating between long and quick strokes, he arched backwards, hands behind him, moving his hips up and down, drawing Hannibal in and out. Then feeling the need for more skin, he urged Hannibal to sit up, so their chests were flush against each other. Using Hannibal's shoulders to brace himself, he pistoned up and down, milking Hannibal. His orgasm was building as he undulated his hips, moving around as Hannibal hit the spot inside every time.

Keeping the pressure up, Will felt Hannibal spurt hot inside him with a fierce groan which made Will grind down harder until he too experienced a quivering internal orgasm that left his whole body shuddering. Hannibal lay back down panting, with Will collapsing on top catching his breath briefly.

'Are you ready?' he said, kissing and sucking Hannibal's chest and hips. Hannibal drew in broken gasps, a fine sheen of sweat on his forehead. He looked so beautiful and utterly fucked, and Will couldn't stop kissing him.

'How do you want me?' he managed to say.

'From behind,' Will said, desire coursing through his body. He was still hard. Hannibal flipped them over, kissing Will, fingers in his hair, and smothering him with his body before

he moved to kneel on the pillows. He braced his hands against the wall above the headboard and bowed slightly so Will could grasp his hips.

Will carefully prepared him, slipping his fingers in and out a few times with lots of lube before Hannibal let out a tattered mewl.

Slicking himself quickly, Will pushed all the way in, in one stroke. They had never done it this way either, and it was amazing. He could go in deeper, and Hannibal's muscles quivered beneath his skin as he pushed back against Will's hips, meeting his thrusts. Long moments passed as they gasped and groaned. Will urged him to straighten his back as he pulled Hannibal up against his chest, holding him steady, impaling him.

Hannibal out a filthy groan. 'Si, Dai. Di piu. Scopami. Si, continua.'

It was thrilling to know how much Hannibal was enjoying this, the guttural sounds he made as Will thrust inside him, not stopping.

'Vienimi dentro, sto venendo.'

Will's mind snapped as he grasped his hips, pushing in harder, and saw Hannibal's hands moving up and down his dripping erection. They came at the same time, Will trembling against Hannibal's sweaty back, pressing wet kisses. Hannibal let out a broken moan as Will held him tightly.

'I love you, I love you, I love you,' Will chanted. Moaning as he mouthed against Hannibal's sweaty neck, sucking and licking.

'Oh god,' Hannibal groaned. He tipped his head back, as Will slurped on his neck, arms steadfast around his middle.

Once he softened, he eased out of Hannibal gently, pushing his sweaty hair away from his face. They both melted onto the bed, struggling to get their breath back.

'I've never had this much sex…ever.' Hannibal closed his eyes. He grunted, and Will laughed. 'Pardon my language, but I think you fucked my brain right out.'

Will preened, he really must be an adult as this was the first time Hannibal swore in front of him. Giving him a fond kiss on his cheek, Will took in the sight before him with satisfaction. Hannibal's hair was in disarray as Will had run his fingers through it so many times, and his lips looked swollen from being kissed so much. His naked body was golden against the black sheets with love bites peppered across his neck, chest, and hips. He looked glorious.

Will nuzzled his neck, inhaling the scent of his skin. 'Maybe I'm a sex addict, but it's our wedding night, let's do it in the jacuzzi.'

Hannibal let out a disbelieving snort. 'You'll have to ride my fingers. I don't think I'm ready for another round just yet.'

'We'll see about that.' Will slipped off the bed and rummaged in his bag.

‘What are you looking for?’

‘I made a mix cd with sex songs.’

‘A what?’

Will reached out his hand, slipping it into Hannibal’s large one.

‘Barry White?’ Hannibal asked as they walked out.

‘Who?’ Will asked. ‘No. It’s songs I’ve heard that make me think of having sex with you.’

‘I’m intrigued.’ Hannibal pinched his bare bottom as Will went to the cd player and Hannibal went to the coffee table. He picked up the bottle from the ice bucket and the two flute glasses.

Will admired Hannibal’s naked form, his tight muscles, his delectable, squeezable behind. He grinned wolfishly and grabbed the cd remote, before getting into the jacuzzi and bubbling it on.

‘Non-alcoholic champagne.’ Hannibal called out.

‘And the cake, please,’ Will said, resting his chin on his forearms on the side of the hot tub.

Hannibal brought the cake and put it down. He poured two glasses and slipped into the water, standing behind Will. A small knife was on the tray, and he kissed Will’s neck.

‘Shall we?’

Will pressed back against Hannibal’s chest.

‘Yes.’

They both held the knife and sliced the cake together. Will broke two pieces, and they both fed it to each other, grinning and kissing, licking the cream.

Will switched the music on, and Hannibal quirked an eyebrow. ‘Are we about to be hypnotised and have tantric sex?’ He slid his lips over Will’s mouth.

Will chortled. ‘Doubt it, but let’s see.’

Either way, it certainly added to the mood, and as Will predicted, Hannibal was ready for another round. Will sat on his lap, taking him in deep, back pressed against his husband’s chest as he rose up and down, relentlessly. Hannibal’s mouth kissing the back of his neck, shoulders, wet licks that sparked to the very core of him. A dizzying orgasm tearing out of them at the same time, as Hannibal stroked him briskly.

Not wanting to move immediately, Hannibal held him, his hands moving in circles over Will’s stomach, rubbing his waist, kissing every part of him that his lips could reach.

Feeling limp and warm, they finally got out of the jacuzzi and Hannibal ordered a wedding meal. Will wanted a choice of finger food because he wanted to feed Hannibal everything today. They ate wearing fluffy robes in the lounge and then got back into bed.

This time they made love. Calm. Slow. Skin worshipped, kissed all over. Their bodies swaying like waves, back and forth, up, and down, rocking to a gentle climax. Together.

The moon glowed, as the large floor to ceiling windows framed the night sky above the glittering landscape of Las Vegas.

'We're married,' Will whispered, staring at his ring. He was laying on Hannibal's chest, as Hannibal stroked his hair. 'This has been the best day,' he said hoarsely. His throat was sore from moaning so much.

'Forever to be remembered, my darling,' Hannibal said.

The next morning, just before dawn, they had sleepy sex. Whispered words in the dark hazy light, Hannibal spooned Will, sliding in and out. Will rocked his hips, drawing him in deeper, setting the pace, holding onto the arms clasped around his stomach, feeling the full hard length pressing inside. Hannibal's breath on the back of his neck, nose pressed into his hair. Will was enveloped in love and solid muscle, silky smooth and gorgeous. The room smelt of sex, their fingers smelt of sex. It was all so delicious and sexy.

Getting ready, and breakfasting on French toast and berries with whipped cream, Hannibal planned a day of sightseeing before they were due back tomorrow.

They went by limo and helicopter to the Grand Canyon and hoover dam with a light lunch on a riverboat before setting back.

In the afternoon, they walked down the strip going into the various hotels to explore the shops and go on the rides. For the evening, they ate dinner at a beautiful restaurant and then watched a magic show at another hotel.

The last few days had flashed by in a whirlwind dream, and Will felt sad as they packed their suitcase.

'We'll go on our honeymoon just as soon as you get your passport.' Hannibal kissed his hand. 'And if you don't mind, my aunt will want to throw us a wedding dinner party. I don't dare deprive her of that.'

Hannibal's aunt and uncle lived in Paris, and Will couldn't wait to see the world and experience anything and everything with his husband.

Hannibal kept an arm around him on the plane ride home; Will tucked in at his side with his arm slung across Hannibal's chest. Hannibal carded his fingers gently through the tumble of curls, massaging his neck lightly. Now and again he would press a gentle kiss on his head, and Will tilted his face upwards to peck him on the lips. He tried to psych himself up to tell his dad on the way back. Hannibal said they could do it together, but Will thought it best done with just him.

Driving back, he practised what to say. But in the end, he used none of his rehearsed script.

‘I love him, Dad. He loves me, and we decided to get married. Hannibal is moving with me to Stanford.’

Dad’s face was growing steadily red like it was about to pop from the pressure building inside.

‘Are you *insane*!’ he yelled. ‘What the *hell* were you thinking?’

Will looked back at him calmly, keeping silent. His dad needed to let off steam.

‘In one week?’ He looked flabbergasted as if his son had suddenly become someone else. ‘You told him you loved him, went away with him and came back married?!’ He shook his head, his hands covering his face. ‘*Chrissake*, Will! Who does that?!’

‘I did that,’ Will said.

‘What were you thinking? Are you thinking? Have you both gone mad! You’re eighteen years old. Getting married at that age like some…’ He struggled to find words.

‘Dad,’ Will said sharply not letting him finish that sentence. ‘I get that you’re angry, but it’s done.’

‘I really can’t believe this, Will. I did not expect this of you. Either of you. I thought Hannibal was…sensible! It was bad enough when I spoke to him a few days ago, and he said he would deny you *nothing*! But that’s taking it to extremes, Will! And you didn’t think that I deserved to know? I’m your father! You’re my son! My little boy.’

‘We’re not trying to hurt you, dad. I love you. Of course, you deserved to know, and I’m telling you now. But I’m not a little boy anymore, dad, and we both want to be together. Moving to California as a married couple feels right. I didn’t want Hannibal as a boyfriend. He means more to me than that, he means everything to me.’

His dad chewed on his upper lip, still shaking his head in disbelief.

‘Will, you’re just *eighteen*,’ his dad repeated. ‘This all happened too fast. You’re not even twenty yet, he’s not even thirty yet. You’re not the first person to fall in love and want to get married, Will! What were you thinking? You’re just caught up in the romance of it. It’s not too late to get it annulled…’

‘Dad! Please, stop. I mean it,’ Will said, his voice rising. ‘Don’t say that ever again. Hannibal is *my* husband.’ He said, feeling emotional and so proud to be uttering such words. ‘I’m sorry you think it’s a mistake, but I love him, and that’s all there is to it.’ Will stood straight and tall.

‘I wanted grandchildren…’ he went on.

‘Hannibal and I can still have children, dad. Just not in the traditional sense. But I’m too young to think about having kids—’

‘Well, thank goodness you’re too *young* to think about some things!’ his dad flung back.

Will took in a steadying breath. ‘I’ve been in love with him for ages. I knew you would always say I was too young to know how I feel, but I *know* how I feel. I want to be with him. He is the love of my life, and you’re not losing me if that’s what you’re worried about, you’re gaining another son.’

He gave his dad a moment to process as he went into the kitchen, pouring himself a drink. His dad slumped on the sofa, still looking like a mine had detonated in front of him.

‘Hannibal would like you to come for dinner tonight.’ He was met with silence. ‘Will you come? Please?’

‘Will,’ he had his head in his hands. ‘This is my fault,’ he muttered. ‘I should have…’

‘Dad,’ Will said, crouching by the sofa and squeezing his hand. ‘It’s not anyone’s fault. It’s not a fault at all. You know Hannibal has always cared for me and looked out for me, but I knew nothing could happen until I turned eighteen, and there was no point pretending that I just wanted to be friends. I wanted this dad. Please, please try and be happy for me. For us.’

‘Will,’ his dad said again, a strangled sound. ‘I just don’t understand it.’

‘Come tonight then, talk to him. Will you come?’

Dad sighed, rubbing his eyes and gave a jerky nod. ‘Yes, I…yes.’ He let out a long breath, sounding resigned.

‘And in a few months, I’d really love for us both to get passports and go to Paris where Hannibal’s family want to throw us a wedding party.’ Hannibal had phoned his uncle when they returned to his house. ‘I want you to be a part of that celebration, all of us together as a family. Please, daddy, think about it?’

Dad shook his head again, bewildered. Will knew he was only reacting like this because he cared. He gave him a quick hug before going into his room and eyeing all his things.

The now dry boutonniere was on his shelf, along with the Disney land knick-knacks which took prime position in the front. So much of his stuff had been given to him by Hannibal, and he felt a rush of love. He would stay here for the week and pack before taking it all to his husband’s house (because he had a husband now).

Hannibal had a long conversation with his dad in private that night. Will trying to be respectful, didn’t even eavesdrop or ask for details. A part of him was worried in case his dad got so angry he threw a punch, but Hannibal was always so poised and calm, Will knew he wouldn’t let it escalate to that point.

Will busied himself in the kitchen when they came back in. Hannibal looked relaxed and gave him a comforting smile, and his dad, though still looking slightly troubled and red-eyed, didn’t appear as angry as he had been. He even gave his blessing, albeit reluctantly.

The next few weeks went quickly. Will loved being with Hannibal every day. The morning blowjobs, morning sex, and sleepy cuddles an extra bonus. Whenever he shifted slightly during the night, and his face tilted upwards, Hannibal's lips would instantly find his, place a soft kiss, and pull him in snuggly into his arms. The level of intimacy was heavenly, and Will never tired of his husband's company. The thrill of knowing they would be together forever filled him with euphoria.

They stayed in Stanford for a few days looking for a house to rent. Will was happy to go along with Hannibal's choice. A beautiful four-bedroom house with a large backyard. Plenty of room for an office, gym, and spare room for guests.

Hannibal was going to keep his house in Louisiana as they would come back and forth to visit Will's dad. He said that his dad was welcome to stay there whenever he wanted for as long as he wished because keeping the house occupied would be a good deterrent for burglars. It also had a huge TV which would be great for watching sporting events. The area was safe, and there was neighbourhood police, but Will knew Hannibal was trying to say it in a way that wouldn't offend his dad.

Will was eighteen.

About to move for college and married to the love of his life.

Dreams really could come true.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you liked the 3 chapters inside Will's head. I wanted you to know how he felt and see how he is becoming a confident young man who is completely and utterly in love with his Hannibal. Love to know your thoughts.

Songs on Will's sex cd- hehe Massive Attack- Inertia Creeps, Nine Inch Nails- Closer, and Garbage- Crush. If you've never listened to these songs, you're welcome!

Side note: Bla bla same sex marriage laws in the 1990s but this is fanfic and in this world same sex marriages are not an issue.

Next time on 'My Everything': Back to Hannibal POVs. California, married life, frat parties and Will gets a dog! Yay!

Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Married life in California!
Happy times.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Hannibal could never have thought in his wildest dreams that he would be the type of person to start a relationship with a sixteen-year-old and be married to an eighteen-year-old, but that is what happened.

Will Graham.

He had taken over Hannibal's life like an adorable hurricane, sweeping him up in a vortex of love. Hannibal believed that in every lifetime, incarnation, Will Graham would consume his world in the best possible way.

He hadn't expected Will to propose to him, but he shouldn't have been surprised. Will was confident; Hannibal had certainly contributed to that. His demeanour no longer that of a young boy, but of a young man who was in command and sure of himself and what he wanted.

He used to think that he was unable to predict *Will*, but his Will astounded him. Hannibal felt such grateful affection when Will defended him, looked out for him, did things for him.

Life as a married man was joyous. Though Hannibal had been married in name less than a year, *before,* it hadn't been official. Just a slew of false documents. There had been no vows. Even then in his state, they would have felt untrue. Having never been in love before nor ever *truly* romantically involved, he now knew relationships were about compromise and not one-sided controlled strategies and manipulations.

As far as he was concerned, this was his first and last marriage. He would forever be Will's husband.

After they had returned from Las Vegas, Will stayed with his father whilst he packed and then moved in with Hannibal for a few weeks before they came to California at the end of August.

Will's father had not taken their relationship lightly. When he rang Hannibal outraged that Will had just left the house because apparently, 'they were going away to spend time together,' he demanded, '*what the hell are you playing at, Hannibal?'*

As ever, Hannibal tried to stick to the truth as much as possible, less room for deceit and lying slip-ups. He said that he realised Will had feelings for him that had grown beyond the scope of mere friendship and assured the man that he had never overstepped the boundaries; never taken advantage of Will. He loved Will but would never have acted upon it unless Will precipitated the relationship. And when he had, Hannibal could not deny Will anything and wanted to explore the burgeoning relationship.

The man had blustered, feeling betrayed as they were supposed to be united in Will's best interest and Hannibal was Will's adopted *'European big brother'* (so much for that theory). Hannibal gently reminded him that he and Will never saw their relationship that way.

Of course, their nuptials threw the man in a frothing frenzy. Entering the house, stern jawed, the first thing he said. 'You and me, outside.'

Hannibal cordially agreed and stood in the backyard while the justifiably shaken father ranted at the idea of his teenage son marrying a man ten years his senior (if he only knew…). It *had* happened very fast, and ideally, Hannibal thought he and Will would be in a relationship first to give his father time to adjust and acclimatise, but Will was having none of that and Hannibal always put Will's wants and needs first.

It had taken a bit of work and cajoling, Hannibal assuring him that Will would be safe with him, happy with him, loved by him always. His new father-in-law grudgingly, in exasperation gave them his blessing (because what else could he do).

Hannibal put Will's name on the house deeds in Louisiana so it was equally owned between the spouses and suggested it would be ideal if his father-in-law could stay there occasionally to keep it running and occupied.

Meanwhile, they settled into their new home in California. Hannibal had applied at the local private hospital which had links to the university and would start a month later.

Three weeks before Will's classes began, they went to the rescue shelter for dogs where Will applied for a part-time job. As they confirmed paperwork, Hannibal hung back and then said. 'Remember I said your birthday gift would have to wait…'

Will's lips split into a huge smile. 'Hannibal? Oh my god. Yesss!'

'One dog, Will. Choose any dog you want.'

Gleefully, Will started his search, spending over an hour while Hannibal sat patiently. He had already made an appointment with the vet and phoned the pet shop to say they would be coming in to get all the paraphernalia.

Will finally came back and led Hannibal towards a handsome Berner with jet black hair and patches of brown and white fur. The dog bounded towards Will.

'It's a boy,' Will said, looking ecstatic.

Hannibal inwardly groaned. A Bernese mountain dog came with lots of shedding and drool, but he had made sure they had rented a house with a big backyard.

‘What do you think?’

‘Excellent choice, love.’

The dog came to just below Hannibal’s waist. Large.

‘I can look into dog training programmes straight away. Start on Monday, maybe.’

‘Good idea. Are we done?’

‘Yay!’ Will said, ruffling the dog’s fur as the dog panted happily at being given so much attention. He motioned for the Berner to follow him and then cast a worried look at the rest of the dogs on the lawn.

‘They’ll be fine, Will. You’ll see them every week.’

However, as they entered the reception to finalise the adoption paperwork, a dog was being given back.

‘Sorry again.’ The woman was saying, lowering it. ‘She’s scared of the kids all the time, and we can’t give her the attention she needs. Bye Rusty. Sorry, we couldn’t give you a home.’

Hannibal felt his senses tingle as Will shot a look at the little Cavalier King Charles Spaniel. A mournful expression in her huge round brown eyes.

The worker took a moment to finish paperwork, and the little dog sloped down against the counter, shivering slightly.

Will’s face creased in concern. ‘Hannibal…’

‘Will…’

‘Look at her. Oh no. She had a home, and she’s been given back. Aww…’

Will patted the Berner to his side and encouraged the dog to join him as they greeted the little Spaniel who was huddled down. The large Berner prodded her with his nose, and she glanced up. Hannibal could have sworn she looked hopeful.

Will crouched on the floor, practically lying down on it as he reached out to stroke her. She responded timidly, and Hannibal knew...

They were going home with two dogs.

‘Thanks, Hannibal.’ Will kissed him thoroughly as they got into the car. The two dogs in the back seat. He hadn’t really thought this through properly. They would need another car for the dogs.

After the vets, they went to the pet shop to get beds, toys, brushes, and food. The car was full to the brim.

Will was very excited to show the dogs their new home, and Hannibal said he would unload the car.

‘I’m gonna call him Max.’ Will chirped when Hannibal finished bringing in everything. His heart did a twist. If Will named the other dog something *Will* had named his dogs…

‘And her name is Lady.’

Relief. ‘Lady?’

‘Yes, Lady. Like Lady and the Tramp.’

Having two dogs certainly kept it lively as they settled in. Will enrolled both on a training program, and they were learning quite fast. Hannibal usually took them for a morning walk as he was more alert, and both he and Will for the nightly stroll.

On the days they had a full schedule, Hannibal hired a dog walker who was given a side door key. She would take the dogs out for a walk and leave them fed and happy in the backyard, waiting for their owners to return.

Will was so happy that Hannibal couldn’t begrudge the extra work involved.

Once again, he made sure he only worked two days a week and kept the third day for his residency. He needed one more year to complete his psychiatry qualification should that be an area he wanted to fall back on later in life. He was sure people thought he was some kind of genius on how quickly he learnt everything and know what to do. Making quite a name for himself everywhere he worked, he maintained warm professionalism but kept his private life private, bar a few choice colleagues who knew he was married.

His secretary being one.

She thought he was too young to be married and when she fished for more information, Hannibal replied honestly that Will was a first-year at college, she baulked. He knew to expect certain thoughts about his husband's age, but when she saw Will for the first time, and both together, she smiled widely.

A look of understanding, as she said, ‘ah, now I see it.’

She gave Will such a fond look, Hannibal thought she was going to pinch his cheeks. She asked Will what type of cookies he liked and bought a packet so whenever he dropped in and was a little early, she would make him a cup of coffee and chat to him while he waited for Hannibal.

His Will charmed everyone without realising.

Will, on the other hand, came back the second week of classes with a photocopy of his registration form, which was a scribbly mess.

‘What is that?’ Hannibal asked squinting at it.

‘Admin dude,’ Will grumbled. ‘He thought I had filled in the form incorrectly when I circled married and spouse and corrected it. So, I corrected it back, and now it’s a mess, but I won’t do a new one out of principle. I said he would have to type it himself if he wanted a new one.’

‘Well, I suppose he hasn’t come across many married eighteen-year-olds. Still, no reason to do that to your form.’ Hannibal frowned and thought in his past life admin man would have warranted a place in his rolodex.

‘What’s been the reaction of your classmates?’

Will shrugged. ‘Some thought I was a backwards southerner until I showed them a photo of you. They think you’re hot.’ He grinned.

‘Mmm, do they really?’ Hannibal said, giving a smug smile and Will kissed him laughing.

‘Yeah, my husband is a *hottie*,’ he drawled.

His relationship with Will was unlike anything he could have imagined, so full of passion, he felt ignited. Will was a magnet drawing him close, attached, pressed together without space. In each other’s company, they were always touching somehow, apart, he was thinking of his husband always. And the sex. They hungered for one another as if they had been apart for years rather than hours. Were other couples like this? He couldn’t fathom. The combination of them together was two halves of a whole. They needed each other. Lived for each other. Was this type of devotion dangerous? Or charming? Healthy? Or sinister? Hannibal never did anything unless he was fully committed and neither did Will.

A month into Will’s classes, they were having dinner, and Hannibal spied a leaflet sitting on the table.

‘KSig, part-ay? Are you going?’

Will rolled his eyes. ‘Can you imagine me at a frat party?’

‘Why not?’ Hannibal said. ‘I assume there are certain milestones all college students undergo. Why should you miss out? Go at least once.’

‘Hannibal.’ Will smiled. ‘I get you wanting me to experience *everything*, but you’ve never been to an American high school or college party. You’ve watched the films, right? Well imagine that, but with more alcohol and not everyone looks like a model.’

Hannibal remembered his time at John Hopkins, and no, he had never experienced a frat party himself or anything akin to that.

‘They’ll be playing beer pong the whole time.’ Will deepened his voice in an apparent impersonation of a frat boy, his arms motioning like he was pressing down on a drill. ‘CHUG, CHUG, CHUG.’

‘Is that what they will be doing?’

‘Yup.’ Will smacked his lips.

He didn’t want Will missing out on any college experiences but respected Will’s wishes if he didn’t want to.

‘You could come with me…’ Will walked his fingers over the dining table towards Hannibal’s hand, tapping his fingers.

‘Really, Will, I’m not sure spouses are invited.’

‘You’ll fit right in with the LA crowd. Anyway, you look like a senior. Some of them are hulks. Plus, you can be designated driver and watch over me. I’ll go, and you’ll be with me. Perfect.’ Will grinned at him craftily.

Max wandered into the room, and Will gave him a ruffle. ‘What do you think? Hannibal should come to the party, yes?’

Max dipped his head to one side, looking contemplative. Then wagged his tongue, in a toothy, drooly, grin.

‘See?’ Will said looking smug, wiping Max’s mouth. ‘Max thinks it’s a great idea.’

On Friday night, Hannibal, now accustomed to dressing down, was dressed in tan chinos and a casual white shirt with sleeves folded up, a few buttons undone on the top.

Will whistled when he came out of the bedroom.

‘You’re going to get hit on.’

‘I’ll wear a sticker on my head that says, “married to Will”.’

Will looked loveable and sweet. His shoulders broad with a defined chest and nearly as tall as Hannibal, but still deceptively delicate, which Hannibal knew he was not. His curly hair tumbled to the nape of his neck, gorgeously tousled and soft looking with blue, blue eyes with a navy t-shirt, blue jeans, and white Converse plimsolls.

Will snorted and grabbed the car keys to Hannibal’s BMW. Hannibal had bought him a Jeep, but they drove both cars depending on the occasion.

Will drove to the campus and parked in the nearest car park. They held hands as they approached the Greek row. Other houses also had parties it seemed, as the music was blaring, and people were walking, talking all around.

The long steps to the frat house were crowded with people smoking and chatting. And vomiting. Hannibal felt Will’s hand tighten, and he raised it to his lips, grazing the knuckles with a gentle kiss.

‘Will!’ came a screech as soon as they entered the open door. Hannibal had no idea which direction the voice came from.

‘Hanna,’ Will said as a petite blonde girl threw her arms around his neck.

‘You came! I didn’t think you would.’

Will tried to return the embrace as best as he could despite not letting go of Hannibal’s hand.

‘And oooo, who’s this?’ She grinned up at Hannibal.

‘This is my husband, Hannibal,’ Will said with a proud look.

Hannibal was about to reach out and shake her hand but thought better of it, and waved instead.

‘Hello,’ he said. ‘Nice to meet you.’

She looked younger than eighteen with a sparkly hairband in her hair, and a feather boa wrapped around her neck. She appeared nice enough and liked Will, which was good.

‘Oh my god!’ she squealed. ‘Everyone, Will brought his husband!’ A few interested faces turned towards them.

‘I was saying to Will, like who gets married at eighteen but like wow, I can see why he married you!’

‘You’re too kind,’ Hannibal said politely.

‘You look like that Spanish actor. What’s his name?’

‘I don’t know,’ Hannibal returned.

‘Great seeing you, Hanna,’ Will said. ‘We’re gonna errr…’

‘Circulate,’ Hannibal filled in. Will nodded and gave a small wave to Hanna as he led Hannibal deeper into the large living room.

The living room was clean enough, from what he could see between the throngs of people, but Hannibal wasn’t too sure what the kitchen or bathroom would look like. A house maintained by young boys… he silently grimaced.

Another one of Will’s classmates spotted him, and he made light conversation.

‘I’ll get us some drinks,’ Hannibal said, not wanting to take any of the drinks offered to them. He would rather get drinks from an unopened bottle. He poured Will a few gulps of light beer and soda water with a slice of lime for himself.

Will slid an arm around his waist when he returned, taking the drink in his other hand. Hannibal dropped a kiss on his head and surveyed the room. There were people everywhere

in all corners, up and down the stairs trailing out of the kitchen. The music was loud. He could distinctly hear a chant of *"Chug, chug, chug"* and smiled into his red cup. They really were playing beer pong and doing jello shots. Will showed no interest in joining in.

Half an hour later, many brave souls were dancing energetically, and Hannibal sat on a sofa squeezed into the corner. He watched Will dance awkwardly for a few dance songs with a group of female classmates. Hannibal at first encouraging from the side-lines. *"Boom boom boom, let me hear you say wey ho, wey ho."* But then Will pulled him up, and Hannibal loosely held his waist as they bumped their hips together on a few fast tracks. Will mouthing song words at him grinning as they danced around each other.

Then a slow song came on. Hannibal had never been the type of person who got moved by listening to chart-topping romantic songs, but every hopelessly dreamy love song he now heard, he thought of Will. As the slow melody began its starting notes, Will grinned at him sweetly and drew Hannibal close—hands snaking around him. Will's chest pressed against his, another small gentle smile bestowed, causing Hannibal's body to quiver.

To be loved by Will.

Hannibal slid one hand up Will's waist, and down his arm to hold his hand, bringing it between them. Faces pressed together, the sides of their lips touching.

Bodies swaying in time to the lifting melody; the lyrics of the song made him feel like he was in a romantic film. No one else existed.

Just him and Will.

Foreheads touching, noses bumping, smiling at one another. Will put his head on Hannibal's shoulder, his hair tickling deliciously against Hannibal's skin.

Perfect.

Hannibal moved his face back as Will lifted his head, gazing at him. His emotions must have been clearly written on his face because Will's lips curved in a breath-taking smile, eyes now looking ultramarine. Clear and open.

They stared at each other as they danced. They were smiling foolishly, shyly, utterly in love. Will's expression calm, content and wondrous. Hannibal trying to anchor himself against Will.

They kissed. Softly. Gently. His hands cupping Will's neck, the warm, warm skin. Anytime he slid his fingers up the back of Will's neck, into the soft hair, he was lost. Brain short-circuiting.

He was trembling, aware of where they were—trying to hold back. Will's arm curling around him, lips sliding against his. Tender. Fingers stroking Hannibal's jaw, down his neck, back up behind his ear.

'Will…' his voice raspy against Will's lips, in a breathless chuckle.

‘I know.’

Will was suddenly kissing him, his cheek, his chin, his neck.

The song finished and he felt completely dazed. Will took his hand, leading him through the crowd and out of the main door. He pulled Hannibal behind the house, where they were alone. The bass of music thumping through the night air, the sounds of chatter all dimming as Will backed him against the wall, kissing him breathlessly, his lips no longer gentle, but thirsty, fervent, open-mouthed.

‘Let's get out of here. Ticked enough boxes.’ Will’s voice was gravelly with arousal.

As soon as they got home, Hannibal swept Will up in his arms, kissing him in desperation. They managed to make it to the dining table. Standing in between Will’s parted knees, both hard, heat radiating off their bodies. Will panted as he arched his back, grinding against Hannibal, hands braced behind on the table. Pushing closer. Faster and then coming back up, half off the table, half in his husband’s arms. Hannibal's hips snapped forward, and they rubbed together, ending with satisfied grunts and sticky clothing.

Breaths calming, he undressed Will and laid him out on the table. Sitting on a dining chair, he pulled Will close, pushing his knees up and draping them over his shoulders, and the back of the chair. Hannibal’s face buried between Will’s parted legs, diving his tongue in as far as it could go, and licking him over and over again. Once Will was writhing and wet, Hannibal slid a finger in gently alongside his tongue.

Will moaned so loud, Hannibal was sure the dogs would wake.

Will told him later that he would never forget the day he went to his first frat party, because of the mind-blowing orgasms when he got home. Hannibal responded that it was the best meal he’d ever had on the table.

Time passed.

That first Christmas, Will, and his father finally had passports, and Hannibal took them both to France to meet his uncle, aunt and Chiyoh. They had a small, elegant wedding party, and got to wear their suits again. The trip set up a tradition of going every year to France with Will and his father for Christmas.

Hannibal had asked his uncle to start renovations to the Lecter castle as he wanted to put Chiyoh’s name as the joint owner along with Will, and gift it to them when it was done. His uncle had looked taken aback, probably assuming that Hannibal would put it in his name. Still, Hannibal knew how loyal Chiyoh had been and was. He wanted to make sure she had a place to call home and live without darkness. She announced that she wanted to study medicine and become a surgeon like Hannibal. At this point in the original timeline, he had not captured and imprisoned the man he would make Chiyoh responsible for (and of course now he wouldn’t and had made peace with that).

He had gone from no family in his past life to a large family in this life. He’d always loved the idea of family, and because of Will, he had everything.

He whisked his young husband away for a belated honeymoon to Antigua before classes resumed. A beachfront suite, with golden sands and turquoise sea view. With a private deck and an outdoor shower, the ‘day bed’ was put to good use.

Whenever their schedules allowed, they went away for a long weekend or abroad for at least a week or two. In Will’s first spring break, they hired a convertible. The weather glorious, sunglasses on, they took a road trip up to San Francisco and Utah taking turns to drive. Will was very entertaining in the car and had a very good singing voice as they both sang along to the mix cd’s Will made.

They stopped off regularly at boutique inns and biked in the national parks, scuba-dived, kayaked in the big lakes and hiked to breath-taking views.

Hannibal didn’t mention travelling to the east coast, any states that touched the Chesapeake Bay, and Florence and Palermo had been stained. The rest of Italy was as beautiful, and Hannibal felt no need to go back to his old hunting ground. He would only go to any of these places if Will wished it, but there was so much of the world to see.

In the other timeline, he had been Il Mostro, the Monster of Florence at this time, creating his works of arts of the living dead, and though it had been satisfying in that life, he had been alone and not ever known true happiness. He could safely say that this life, the *unattainable dream* which was his reality now, was by far the most preferable, beautiful life he could ever wish, hope, dare to dream for.

In the height of the picture-perfect summer, they bought a sprinkler, and the dogs went crazy for the fountain shower pouring over them as they ran about the front yard. Will was trying out the settings when Hannibal got back from work and soaked him thoroughly as he stepped out of the car.

Snickering Will clamped a hand over his mouth as Hannibal put down his briefcase on the porch and stalked towards him purposefully.

‘No,’ Will said backing up on the grass. ‘Hannibal…’ He started giggling as Hannibal picked the sprinkler up. The dogs barked excitedly, getting wet with the direction of the water swaying back and forth.

‘Want to get wet, Will?’ Hannibal said with a devilish smile.

Will covered his face with his hands, chortling as the sprinkler rained over him. Hannibal set it down, soaking them both as he pressed Will onto the wet grass, kissing him, their clothes sticking to their bodies.

Lady and Max bounded around them, barking happily, zapping through the jets. Will groaned into Hannibal’s mouth, as Hannibal’s hands trailed up his wet bare legs, shorts bunching up his thighs. Fingers reaching further up, a thumb stroking the soft skin.

‘Hannibal…’ Will moaned. ‘I want to come.’

‘All right.’ Hannibal chuckled and got up, pulling Will to his feet and threw him over his shoulder. Will let out a peal of laughter.

‘Time to get inside,’ Hannibal said, picking up his briefcase and whistled for the dogs to follow them in, Will still hanging over his shoulder, laughing.

He pounded up the stairs and threw a breathless, giggling Will on the bed. He slammed the door shut with the back of his foot as Max and Lady watched it close.

Will’s laughter quickly turned into loud groans as Max pawed at the door. Lady sat patiently, watching him. He gave her a doleful look suggesting playtime was over, and Lady wagged her tail with an almost knowing glance before she led him downstairs to the kitchen and their food bowls.

An hour later, the bedroom door opened, and Hannibal and Will materialised freshly showered and dressed in shorts and t-shirts. Making melted cheese and barbecue chicken paninis with a side of fries, Will sat on Hannibal’s lap as they ate an early dinner on the patio watching the dog’s play.

A month later, Hannibal had a work party and foolishly skipped dinner and ended up drunk. Will picked him up at 11.30 pm and was more than surprised when a very tipsy Hannibal fell into the car. His first action was to capture Will’s head in between his hands, squeezing his cheeks together and planting wet kisses on Will’s startled, pouty mouth.

Will laughed, gasping for breath. ‘Please tell me you weren’t like this inside. You walked to the car soberly enough.’

‘I have laser-sharp focus, Will,’ he pointed to his eyes and tapped his head. ‘I willed myself not to be drunk and stood very stiffly inside, feeling my head full of waves, bit sea-sick. This…the drink didn’t hit me until I what’s it…walked into the light. So bright. Outside.’ He tilted forward again, like a limpet, sucking on Will’s bottom lip. ’You’re so *pretty*.’

‘Hannibal,’ Will chuckled, trying to pull away. ‘This is all really lovely, but let’s go home, yeah?’

‘Okayyyy,’ Hannibal said, releasing him and sitting back in the seat once Will had secured his seat belt. He reached his hand out, his finger twirling around Will’s curls, stroking his neck. Sighing, staring at him with a big happy, goofy grin.

‘You’re so beautiful when you drive,’ he said adoringly.

‘Thank you.’ Will grinned.

‘I love you,’ Hannibal said.

‘Thank you.’ Will guffawed.

They pulled into the garage, and Will quickly got out of the car and raced around to help Hannibal who seemed to be having problems taking off his seat belt.

‘Come on, let’s get you in.’

Will put his arm around him and hauled him into the kitchen, helping him sit in the dining chair. Hannibal sat with a thump and Lady scampered into the kitchen at the noise, looking excited, her tongue lolling out.

He bent down to pick her up, stroking her long soft ears. ‘Hello, madam, how are you? What do you need? Huh? Huh?’ She yapped at him.

Will put down a tall glass of water. ‘I’m making you a sandwich. Ham and cheese?’

‘Grilled, yes, please. Yum. Isn’t it going to be yum? Mmm?’ Hannibal asked Lady, and Will kissed the top of his head before moving towards the fridge.

He gulped down the water and let Lady slip off his lap.

‘Will?’

‘Mmm?’

‘Are you the loveliest?’

‘Yes, of course.’

‘You look like a prince from a fantasy film.’

‘I’ll be sure to wear my tights.’

Hannibal drummed his fingers on the dining table.

‘I forgot to eat, sorry. I should have. I’m not very good with vodka, and I don’t know what happened. Sorry.’

‘No problem,’ Will called out from the stove. Hannibal undid his tie and loosened his collar.

Max padded in, and he patted him. ‘Let’s give them some treats.’

‘Really? It’s midnight.’

‘Midnight snack. We’re having one. It’s only good and proper that they should too.’

He got up unsteadily and went to the cupboard to get some treats. The dogs instantly smelt them and leapt up eagerly, paws on legs. He crouched down to feed them, grinning at them fondly.

Will put down two plates of grilled ham and cheese, and Hannibal put an arm around him, giving him a sloppy kiss.

‘Awww you’re so lovely, aren’t you?’ He lightly pinched his cheeks, and Will looked at him, amused. He ruffled Will’s hair behind his ears. ‘Are you cute? Look at you. Say you’re cute.’

‘Baby talk? Am I a puppy? Okay. Yes, I’m cute. Nice. Thank you, let’s eat.’

‘This is very good.’ Hannibal gulped it down.

Will pushed painkillers towards him, and he swallowed them as Will cleared the plates and put the dogs in the side room.

He came back out to see Hannibal almost dozing off.

‘We need to go upstairs.’

‘I’ll carry you,’ Hannibal said, looking suddenly alert.

‘No, no, no one is carrying anyone,’ Will said, trying to keep Hannibal from lifting him when they reached the stairs. ‘We’re going to walk upstairs, okay?’

They managed, and Will commandeered him towards the bathroom.

‘Please pee and brush your teeth while I get your pj’s—’

Hannibal stood by the toilet, looking at the wall. ‘Wait, wait,’ Will said coming up behind him, and pulled off his suit jacket. ‘Hannibal take a piss! What are you looking at?’

Hannibal pointed at the wall at the framed picture of a toilet roll with *“I like big butts, and I cannot lie”* written on it.

‘Has that always been there?’

‘Yeah, I put it there when we came back from honeymoon. So you always remember how much you like the song even though you pretend you don’t.’

Hannibal smirked. ‘The club, you dancing. Your bottom. So delectable, like a peach. Delicious.’ He made biting sounds.

‘Thank you, darlin’,’ Will said going back out. ‘Pj’s?’ He enquired as Hannibal came out a few minutes later.

He shook his head. ‘Underpants only. Want to feel you. Need skin.’

‘Okay, get in bed. Be out in five.’

Will went to the bathroom while Hannibal negotiated his laces and gave up, toeing the shoes off instead. He got out of his trousers and was working himself up to undoing his shirt buttons when Will came back out.

‘You’re still not undressed?’

He undid Hannibal’s shirt and pulled it off. Taking off his socks and pushing him under the covers.

Will shed his clothes keeping on his boxers and switched off the lights, getting into bed. Hannibal at once pulled him into his arms, pressing him down and kissing him, with hungry wet kisses.

‘Hannibal,’ Will laughed underneath him. ‘I have to breathe. You’re eating my face!’

Hannibal stopped instantly. ‘No Will, I would never eat your face. No, no, never. Ever. Will, never.’

‘I know, Hannibal, I’m just joking.’

But Hannibal couldn’t stop fawning over him, touching him, kissing him, nuzzling him, nosing his way down his chest, back up his neck. ‘Every minute I’m not kissing you is wasted,’ he murmured. Kissing everywhere. Hands everywhere, stroking lightly. ‘I would never ever hurt you, Will. Ever. Never. Ever. Never hurt you. I love you so much. I love you so much—my darling. Aš tave myliu. I would die first than ever hurt you. You are the most important, precious, love ever, ever…’

‘Hannibal, thank you. Aš tave irgi myliu. I love you too, let’s try and sleep, yes?’

‘I’ll hold you. I’ll never let you go.’ He cuddled Will, snuggling his face into the warm crook of his neck. ‘Goodnight, Will.’

‘Isn’t it weird to say goodnight as we hold each other?’ Will mused out loud.

Hannibal stroked circles on Will’s stomach. ‘We’re separated while asleep, so we’re bidding each other a good night’s sleep. Though I always dream of you.’

Will gave a low chuckle, the vibration comforting. ‘Goodnight.’

He played with Hannibal’s hair, soft, soothing movements and Hannibal eventually fell asleep with his head on Will’s chest, their arms wrapped tightly around one another.

The next morning Hannibal woke up feeling flat, though not hungover. Will went downstairs to make coffee and passed it to him as he sat up blearily.

He nursed the hot mug in his hands. ‘Will?’

‘Mmm?’ Will was rummaging the drawers for something, and Hannibal reached out for his hand.

‘I’m sorry about last night.’

Will stuck his head up. ‘Sorry? About what?’ He came upon the bed, one leg folded under and took Hannibal’s hand, thumb stroking the side. ‘You're allowed to get tipsy now and again. It’s all right.’

‘No, Will it isn’t.’ Hannibal shook his head. ‘I shouldn’t have put you in that position. I was not lucid, and it wasn’t fair.’

‘Cripes, it’s fine.’

Hannibal pulled him closer, a chaste kiss on his lovely mouth. ‘I should be the one to take care of you.’

‘Excuse me?’ Will said it mock outrage. ‘We’re married, sweetheart. We both take care of each other all right?’

‘Okay,’ Hannibal said. But he wouldn’t let that happen again. He could have said something stupid, or anything could have happened. He was supposed to take care of Will.

‘Be that as it may, I’ll endeavour for it not to happen again.’

‘*Ever. Never. Ever*,’ Will mimicked him with a playful grin giving him a sloppy wet kiss.

He was so good-natured, funny, and even-tempered. Brave and practical, unafraid of new situations, taking it in his stride.

Hannibal had glimpsed all these qualities in *Will,* though life didn’t allow him much light beyond the shroud. *Will* barrelled towards danger, fearless but smothered in darkness, and dank, damp earth. His Will here and now was limitless, like the sky, bright with dreams and glowing sun.

Life was a series of happy events.

By now his father-in-law had taken a few jobs out of state and saved enough money to move into a nicer neighbourhood. He stayed with them in their Louisiana house, when they went back for Super Bowl weekend and made sharing platters of buffalo wings, mac and cheese, and pulled pork. They held barbecues on Fourth of July and Labor Day, with Will’s father making Thanksgiving dinner whilst Hannibal made the pies.

Occasionally he came to stay with them in California, and for all his, ‘*dogs are a nuisance,*’ he loved Max and Lady, taking them for long walks and spoiling them.

Hannibal applied for his psychiatry license once all the requirements had been met. Will was excelling in his course, thanks partly to his eidetic memory. Cramming the night before and on the morning of, he sailed through presentations and aced exams. They had long debates and discussions about human behaviour and psychology, and he loved Will challenging him and disagreeing with him. His darling could hold his own, and sometimes he would stop speaking and just watch Will adoringly as he talked passionately. Will would notice eventually.

‘Hannibal,’ he’d chide with a small smile. ‘What did I just say?’

Hannibal tugging him close with his hands around the slender waist, nuzzling his face. ‘You said you were il marito piŭ bello.’

‘I did not say that.’ Will would chuckle and crowd in between Hannibal’s parted legs kissing him.

‘Mmm.’ Hannibal’s face tilted up and kissed thoroughly. ‘You didn’t? That must be me thinking out loud.’

Will would give an embarrassed but delighted grin.

‘It’s a brilliant paper, darling. I’m not just saying that. Promise. It’s very well thought out and succinctly put.’

‘Thank you for proofing it.’ Will would perch on his thigh and peck a few more dozen kisses on his lips.

Before Hannibal hadn’t been much of a moviegoer in his later years but now went often on movie dates, which he enjoyed immensely. With one arm around Will, the other holding Will’s hand when they weren’t jostling for popcorn and munching milk duds. His heart turning with tenderness when Will rested his head on his shoulder, and he would inhale the soft curls with a smile. Occasionally, Hannibal would remember seeing a movie the first time around and knew it wasn’t very good. He would doze off with his head on Will’s shoulder only to be elbowed gently awake and met with a little scowl that he would kiss away, smirking.

They played volleyball on the beach, picnicked often, went to elegant cocktail parties given by the hospital and university. Skiing a few times and the last time, Hannibal dislocated his knee on the way down a slope and had to wear a brace and use crutches. Will pampered him and took care of him while he recovered.

Will had thrown Hannibal a surprise party for his thirtieth birthday with his family from France flying over. It was so nice to see his husband and Chiyoh get along, Hannibal’s thoughts sometimes straying to the other *Chiyoh* prowling with her rifle ready to shoot *Will* at any given moment.

Hannibal had not felt moments of panic and anxiety since Will had left high school. Now that he was with Will every day, their picture-perfect life unfolded page by page, as the weeks, months, and years went by.

One afternoon, he had been called back at the hospital for an urgent case, and he was still stuck there at dinner time.

He quickly placed a call.

‘Darling, I’m still here. Sorry, eat without me okay?’

‘All right,’ Will said. ‘I’ll take the dogs for a walk about nine though as Max is hyper.’

‘Yes, okay. I should be home by nine-thirty. Love you.’ He made kissy noises.

‘Love you,’ Will replied, and Hannibal could hear the smile in his voice.

He managed to pull into the garage at nine twenty-five. Going into the house, he immediately sensed that he was alone. Freshening up, he expected Will to be back soon, but at nine forty, Will still had not returned. Hannibal rarely missed noughties comforts, but he really wished

he and Will had smartphones. They both had cells, but because Will hardly used his, neither did he.

He really wished Will had taken it with him now.

It was sitting on the cabinet.

At nine forty-five, he grabbed the house keys and left to find Will. He took the usual route they walked the dogs, backwards. He kept walking but still no sign of Will.

His heart thumped uncomfortably and tried not to let anxiety cloud his mind. Will had the dogs with him, and their walks stayed within the quiet residential areas, never walking as far as the main roads...

Suddenly, he heard the siren of an ambulance and then the flashing lights as it drove by. His stomach dropped as he spotted a small crowd of people and Max's large form. Racing towards them as the group began to disperse, he saw Will. Relief poured over him, and without speaking, he pulled Will into his arms.

'I'm sorry,' Will mumbled. 'A couple were walking, and the husband fell. He was having a heart attack…'

Hannibal nodded, placing frantic kisses on Will's face. '…knocked for them to call an ambulance and waited for it to arrive…sorry.' Hannibal held him tightly, his heartbeat still hammering. Max nudged at his thigh, and Lady was nosing around his shoes.

'Please take your cell with you next time…' Hannibal swallowed around the growing lump in his throat. 'Just give me a call or text.'

'I know.' Will looked sheepish as he looped his arm around Hannibal, and they started to walk back. 'I was thinking that when I asked for the time. I forgot to wear my watch.'

Hannibal took Max's leash from Will and gripped his free hand.

'You were worried. I'm sorry,' Will said.

Hannibal tried to muster a smile, but it didn't work. From then on, they both kept their phones with them.

For Will's twenty-first birthday, Hannibal surprised him with a cabin by a lake.

Will was stunned as he ran around exploring, his blue eyes shining like jewels and he flung his arms around Hannibal when he said he had bought it.

'For you,' he told Will. They stood in front of the beautiful small wooden cabin, arms around each other.

Will tipped his face up, kissing him. 'For us,' he said.

His dear, precious husband. ‘Our life.’ Hannibal cradled Will’s face against his, breathing him in.

After they unpacked, they sat by the water, fishing. An hour in, Will carried on as Hannibal sat back in the chair. Will slotted between his legs, patiently holding the line. He nibbled on Will’s neck, kissing the soft column, nuzzling him behind the ear. Will silent and still, breath broken by an occasional sigh.

Hannibal looped his arms around Will’s waist, and he felt so comfortable and warm, he fell asleep. He awoke an hour later to a face full of curls as Will had promptly fallen asleep too.

Smiling, he kissed the top of Will’s head.

‘Hey, sleeping beauty,’ he said. ‘Let’s go in.’ His arms crossed in front of Will’s chest, pulling him back even closer and Will let out a contented moan.

They went inside after clearing up, and Will lit the fire.

A small smile on Will’s face as he started to undress, and once he was naked, he undressed Hannibal. Flames flickering, feeling high on life, Hannibal laid a blanket in front of the fireplace. He sat on the ground with legs outstretched, and Will lowered onto him, taking him in deep. Chests pressed together; they kissed as Will rode him up and down. Hannibal bent his knees, and Will slid down his thighs, comfortably sitting in the valley of his body. Supporting Will’s weight, Will hooked his legs behind him, rolling his hips sinuously.

Watching his love enjoying himself, listening to his rapturous cries always made Hannibal shiver with desire.

Stretching their legs, they rocked with a slow, languorous pace. No rush. Just moving together. Gentle orgasms with soft sighs and moans.

Afterwards, they lay by the fire under a blanket, Will’s palm against his cheek. ‘Hannibal,’ he whispered. ‘Thank you for loving me so much.’

Any time Will said words to this effect, Hannibal flooded with emotion. ‘Don’t say things like that, Will. You break my heart.’ Will kissed him tenderly, and their hands wound in each other’s hair with gentle tugs and hungry kisses. ‘It is I who should be thanking you.’

Will wrinkled his nose. ‘We’re meant to be, Mr. Pre-ordained.’

Will’s father met a woman named Louella, and they saw her at Thanksgiving. She had bouncy blond curls and doll-blue eyes with a heart of gold. Will’s father glowing, asked them to spend new year’s together. Will was delighted to see his father so happy, and they had a lovely time bringing in the new year.

One evening, in Spring, Hannibal agreed to do a late surgery, which he rarely did and didn’t get home until after dinner time. Will had made leek, and cheesy haddock chowder served with crusty bread rolls. Hannibal was always moved when Will made dinner. He was excellent and didn’t make fancy plates like Hannibal but could cook good comfort food.

When he walked in, Will was in the lounge, laying on the sofa.

‘Hello, darling.’ Hannibal kissed him.

‘Hey,’ Will said. He looked distracted.

‘Are you okay?’

‘Yeah, just tired. Went boating. Shouldn’t have done an hour of it.’

‘I can run you a bath if you like. Might help soothe the muscles before bed.’

Will made a face. ‘I’m just gonna watch some tv. You wanna have your dinner in here?’

Hannibal got changed into something more comfortable and then took his dinner with Will in the lounge.

Will fell asleep, and Hannibal didn’t disturb him until it was time to go up and he awoke groggily.

‘What time should we leave tomorrow?’ Hannibal asked. Will had been invited to a faculty party by one of the Dean’s.

‘The what?’ Will asked.

‘The party? Tomorrow? At the Dean’s house.’

‘Oh.’ Will frowned as they reached the bedroom. ‘Umm, dunno.’ He sighed.

Hannibal felt his forehead. He wasn’t hot. ‘Get some sleep. See how you feel in the morning.’

‘Yeah.’ Will was already in his pyjamas. ‘Do we have painkillers?’

Hannibal’s chest tightened.

‘I have a headache.’

‘Top drawer,’ he said. Will never had a headache.

He got into bed, and Hannibal gathered him close, Will’s head resting on his arm, face pressed against the side of his chest. He carded his fingers through Will’s hair, feeling a coil of dread unfurl.

Three am, he woke up with a start, having drifted off. He felt wet… he ran his hands over Will, and his heart rattled.

Will was burning.

Hannibal jerked awake, twisting to switch on the bedside lamp.

Will was soaked through with sweat and was hot to touch. Hannibal felt immobile for a few seconds before he leaned in to smell Will's neck.

'Oh god, Will, darling. Wake up.' He flung off the covers. A long, damp patch of sweat on the bedsheets, Will's face pale and clammy. His lips were waxy, his breathing shallow.

Will wasn't stirring. Hannibal ran to get the thermometer and checked Will's temperature. 105c. He at once phoned the paramedics.

With a trembling voice, he said, 'suspected Anti-NMDA encephalitis.'

Chapter End Notes

The end is nigh!
Next time on 'My Everything': As much as Hannibal tries to protect his life with his Will, the past is always present.

Side note: Love songs at the frat party- VH1 was playing in the background and I was listening to Celine Dion 'Falling into you' and ' Halfway to heaven'. Love music from the1990s.

Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

Lots of Hannibal feels, lots of fluff, some tender filth and some concern...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

‘Will, wake up, wake up.’

Will stirred slightly, his eyelids flickering but wouldn’t wake. Hannibal turned him on his side and ran down to open the front door and then raced back upstairs. He quickly changed and grabbed his house keys and wallet as the paramedics arrived.

As correctly diagnosed by Hannibal, Will did indeed have encephalitis.

Was Will always going to fall prey to this horrible illness? Will had never been sick for as long as Hannibal had known him. Was this his fault? Had him being here caused Will to get sick somehow?

As soon as Will was taken to the hospital, they fought to bring his temperature down. Hannibal spent a heart-stopping hour feeling like his world was ending.

Will was sick.

He was told to stay outside, allowing him in eventually, as they waited for the medication to work. Hannibal pulled a chair by the bedside, holding Will’s hand, caught in a nightmare.

‘Darling,’ he whispered. ‘Don’t be scared, my love. I’m here. It’s okay. You’re all right.’

He looked at the machines and his throat clogged as he caught sight of Will’s blood pressure. It needed to be higher. They kept trying to make it go up.

But it continued to drop, and the nurses rushed in along with the doctor, ushering him back out.

He stared through the windows as they frantically moved around. Someone lowered the blinds.

Was Will going to die?

He pictured Will’s face. Will had been tired, but there had been no signs all this time. He hadn’t been unwell or anything, how could Hannibal have known?

Will's sweet little face. His love. His husband. Oh my god. Was this it? Just like that? Mere moments to die.

What were the last words they had spoken? What had he said as Will fell asleep? He couldn't remember.

Will…

His eyes in tear-filled horror; abject despair. His chest hurt; the swell of pain was intolerable.

'Will…'

What if Will *actually* died? Would this really be the end of their love story?

He couldn't lose Will. Not another Will. One taken by the sea, another slipping away.

Not again.

His heart and soul would be completely torn, the sorrow so fatal that he wouldn't survive even if he didn't take his own life; which he would, instantly, should it happen again.

If Will's heart stopped beating, Hannibal wished for his to stop the next second.

And that is what happened.

Will crashed at 03.38 am.

…

And as soon as they revived him, Hannibal's vision went black, and his legs buckled. He was falling, and the ground gave way.

03.41 am.

…

He opened his eyes.

He was laying on a hospital bed.

'Hello, there.' A doctor was looking at him anxiously. 'You both gave us quite a scare. Had us really worried.'

Hannibal blinked. 'Will…' He tried to sit up.

'He's all right. He's fine. You can go back to him but just take it easy. You stopped breathing and took a bad tumble. Cracked your head on the sidebar.'

Hannibal lifted his hand to the back of his head. A lump.

'I'm fine,' he muttered and sat up.

‘Your heart stopped! Just give yourself a moment!’

‘I’m fine,’ he snapped. ‘I want to get back to Will.’

‘Okay, okay. Let me help you.’

The doctor helped him stand up. He felt lightheaded and shook his head, trying to clear his vision. It was nearly dawn.

By mid-morning, they put Will on antiviral and steroid therapies.

Hannibal didn’t leave his side, too petrified to move. They had given him strong painkillers for the bump induced headache, and he felt strangely detached, only shuffling out when he realised, he should phone his father-in-law. Hannibal tried to reassure him that Will would be fine after the heart-stopping scare and felt a little comforted when the man said he would be on the next flight out.

Logically, it had been caught early. Hadn’t it?

He had let *Will’s* brain burn away for how long?

Stunned and numb, he sat by Will fixedly watching his face. The tears wouldn’t stop. He leant his head on Will’s chest, feeling the steady beat, kissing the thumping heart.

His tears were soaking the bedsheets as he gazed at Will’s face. Reaching out, his fingers softly stroked Will’s cheek before retaking his hand.

‘I’m here. I’m right here. It’s okay.’

His father-in-law arrived in the afternoon; both sitting by Will’s bed.

Hannibal popped out for a moment, phoning the dog walker to pick up house keys from the hospital and told her to take Max and Lady to the dog hotel they used when they went away on holiday.

A day later, Will stabilised, and Hannibal made arrangements to move him to the hospital where he worked.

He went home to pack a small bag of his and Will’s things and went straight back to accompany Will in the ambulance.

They placed Will in an induced sleep for the treatment to start working, and Hannibal sat motionless, holding Will’s hand. His father-in-law had been so tired, Hannibal told him to go home and sleep for a few hours. The man clamped a hand on Hannibal’s shoulder and promised he would be back in the morning and to phone if there was any change. Hannibal nodded mechanically.

He couldn’t help feeling that something was starting to unravel. Was this all slowly slipping away? Sand granules through his fingers? Shifting. Something in the air.

Was this his punishment?

Will had been worried and said that he should get a brain scan and Hannibal, knowing full well what was wrong, talked him out of it initially. It's stress—your job.

"I feel like I'm fading…I know what kind of crazy I am, and this is not that kind of crazy. This could be seizures. This could be a tumor. A blood clot."

And only then had Hannibal recommended a neurologist, but said, *"if it isn't physiological, then you have to accept what you're struggling with is mental illness."*

How, even, Sutcliffe had been surprised that Hannibal was willing to watch *Will* deteriorate. *'Symptoms are going to get a lot worse'* he had told Hannibal to which Hannibal replied, *'I know. It's unfortunate for Will'. 'So, you set his mind on fire. How far is this going to go? Put out the fire or let him burn?'* How callously Hannibal had said, '*Will's my friend. We'll put out the fire. When it's necessary. Now we've confirmed what it is. It'll be easier to hide from him.'*

Going as far as suggesting to *Will* that he might have Dementia. Sinking so low, that a grotesque even like Abel Gideon had flinched when they both watched *Will* endure a seizure and Hannibal lied to *Will's* face. Calmly telling Gideon that it was only mild, and he would inform the relevant people of *Will's* illness when the time came. He never did. Instead inducing *Will's* seizures, making him question his sanity.

To Bedelia, admitting reluctantly, that he did care for *Will* but still pretending to be an innocent seeing the demise of his friend.

How? How had he so easily stood back and let *Will* suffer like that? What would *Will* say to him now? This is what it feels like to hurt, Hannibal. For someone, you trust to betray you. Hurt you on purpose for their amusement and machinations.

Hannibal held Will's hand in between his, like a prayer to his lips. Please don't hurt him. Please leave him alone. Please. Please let him be okay. His beautiful, lovely Will. He was innocent; it wasn't fair for him to suffer to punish Hannibal. Whatever this was…

'Please be okay, Will. My love. Darling.'

Will had only begun his life. Barely into adulthood. He had to get better, he had to. Hannibal sat like an unmoving statue, rigid with shock. He was living a good life, loving Will, being a good husband, a good son-in-law, a good nephew, colleague. What else could he do? What should he do? He couldn't undo anything. Had he dared to be too happy? Life was too good, and this was its way of showing it could take just as much as it could give.

He never used to cry, not since Misha. Feel a tingle yes, tears frozen but not spilling yes, but when *Will* died, the agony along with the gut-wrenching grief infused with madness and hysteria, caused the scalding tears to fall. Since then, his emotions rested just behind his eyes. Open and vulnerable and tuned into Will for every nuance. Any hint of their fragile life under threat threw him into a dark bottomless spiral.

Don’t hurt Will. Will couldn’t be hurt.

Please.

Shoulders shaking, he couldn’t see clearly. Head bent low, tears falling on the bedside. He reached out a hand and smoothed it over Will’s forehead. Kissed the side of his temple. Lips pressed as he cried.

‘I’m here, darling. You’re safe. It’s okay.’

He was so scared.

‘Dr L. Graham?’

Lifting his head, he took a breath. ‘Yes?’ He cleared his throat.

‘Will is going to be okay…’ it was a nurse that he worked with often. Dee.

He nodded, not bothering to wipe the tears.

‘I know they said they were going to wake him up tomorrow because they’re pleased with his vitals. You’ve read his chart. You know better than most.’

He nodded again. ‘Yes, he will be fine.’

She laid a reassuring hand on his shoulder, and he cringed at her kindness. He didn’t deserve it. He had done unforgivable things to *Will.*

‘Why the tears?’ she gently asked, giving him a tissue.

Taking a moment, he then said. ‘Will has never been sick. Ever. Seeing him so ill, lying in the hospital, it’s excruciating.’

‘He will be fine. Your sweet husband is young and strong. He’s a fighter.’

He was.

Hannibal spent the night sitting upright on a chair next to Will, even though there was a cot for him to sleep on. The room was large with an en-suite, and a tv, comfortable as far as private hospital rooms go but Hannibal had no intention of being comfortable. Keeping a vigil over Will was all he wanted to do.

The next day Will was doing better, and they drew him out of the sleep state. He would wake within the hour they told him. Rationally he knew that; being familiar with the medication, but right now, he was lost in a thorn filled maze and was glad for someone else to guide him. His thoughts confused and hideous and petrified.

Will’s eyelids began to flicker, and Hannibal caressed his cheek, tears threatening to fall again, his eyes red-rimmed and swollen.

‘Hello, darling. I’m here, it’s okay. You’re okay. Take your time to open your eyes.’

He placed a kiss on Will’s nose, caressing his jaw. A light kiss on the cheek.

‘I’m here,’ he whispered, his breath kissing Will’s lips.

A glimpse of hazy blue-green as Will squinted before widening his eyes and blinking a few times to look properly. An immediate spark of joy lit Hannibal’s heart at the beautiful sight. He had been so terrified that he would never see Will’s lovely eyes open again. Will was like the sun chasing away the darkness. The howling wind and empty rooms vanishing at a glance.

‘I thought you said I was okay?’ Will croaked, licking his lips. Hannibal had been wetting them so they wouldn’t go dry, but he must be thirsty.

‘Here…’ Hannibal raised the bed and tilted Will’s head up, letting him sip some water from a straw.

Will drew back. ‘If I’m okay then why do you look like you’ve just delivered my eulogy at my funeral?’

‘Will! Don’t say that.’

‘Well…’ Will muttered.

‘You’re absolutely fine.’ He cradled Will’s face, savouring the sound of his voice, the feel of him, warm skin, alive. His lashes were wet with tears as he placed a gentle kiss on Will’s lips. ‘You’ve recovered well. We might even be out of here in a week.’

He alerted Will’s doctor, and fussed around him, adorning more kisses on his face.

‘What happened?’ Will asked.

Hannibal took his hand and was finishing telling him when the doctor came in.

‘We don’t think there is any need for continuing treatment. We’ll run a few more tests, but I expect you’ve made a full recovery and just need rest for a few weeks. Although we would like to monitor you, and have you come in every six months or so just to make sure everything is fine. But you’re young and otherwise healthy. You’re going to be fine.’ He grinned at Will. ‘Let your husband spoil you for a bit.’

‘He already does every day. I couldn’t be more spoiled.’ Will glanced at Hannibal who was unsmiling, looking serious.

When they were alone again, Will squeezed Hannibal’s hand. ‘You’re freaking me out. Are you sure I’m not really sick because you’re…? What’s wrong?’

‘Nothing,’ Hannibal replied automatically. ‘It was difficult seeing you, unwell. I’m not as courageous as I aspire to be.’

Will's father spent the rest of the day with them. Hannibal watched as they played 'Go Fish' in a hazy surreal fog. He hadn't slept properly for a few days and hardly eaten. Everything felt underwater and dreamlike.

He'd had to die to find his Will. His beautiful lovely precious Will. To think that if he hadn't, they never would have met. It was so intricately warped. To be living in a world without his love was so unbearable now, absolutely horrifying, and unbearable. His beautiful love.

His love.

Love.

What if he hadn't died? Where would his lovely Will be? To have never known his Hannibal. Neither of them knowing the full meaning of true love in its purest form.

How tragic for both of them if that had been the case. How awful.

They had to be together.

Forever.

Always.

He couldn't lose Will.

His head hurt.

In the evening, Will was famished and wanted a greasy burger and fries. Dee had popped in to take Will's temperature and said she was finishing her shift soon and would run down and get dinner for the three of them. Hannibal gave her a weak smile and thank you. Will's father said goodnight after they had eaten.

Kissing Will on the head, he patted Hannibal's shoulder.

'Goodnight, son, try and get some rest. You look worse than Will.'

Hannibal nodded. 'Yes.'

Will shot Hannibal a concerned look, and Hannibal quickly schooled his expression. He didn't want Will worrying about him. He needed to concentrate on himself.

'I'm fine. Sorry. I'm silly. You're awake now. It's all going to be fine.'

Will suggested he go home to sleep, but he refused.

'Wanna try and sleep with me?' Will asked. Hannibal saw him glance at the unused cot that was against the wall.

'Darling, I'm a little too big. Not sure if we will both fit.'

Will wiggled his brows. 'Come on let's try. It will be cosy.'

Hannibal pecked an affectionate kiss on his lips and helped him to the bathroom, eyeing the bed on the way back. It was slightly bigger than a single, and he could lie on it if Will literally slept on top of him.

Which is exactly what Will wanted and did. Careful of his drip, they arranged themselves in the bed and put up the barriers, so they didn't fall out.

Hannibal wrapped his arms around Will protectively, Will's head tucked under his chin, arms snaked around his waist. And they slept.

After breakfast, the next day, Will wanted to have a shower, and Hannibal scooped him up and took him to the bathroom, sitting him on the stool in the walk-in shower. Undressing him, and washing him gently, he helped Will change into his own set of pyjamas rather than the hospital gown. He was feeling tired, which was expected. His body had been fighting hard.

Will's father visited after lunch and stayed a few hours, and Hannibal took the opportunity to use the shower and dress in fresh clothing.

Will wanted pizza for dinner, so they ate whilst watching tv. The tension starting to ease in Hannibal's chest as Will seemed to be returning to normal.

They spent the next few days in a similar fashion, Hannibal staying with him all day and all night.

On the morning Will was discharged, Hannibal packed away their items, and Will was dressed and standing in his socks, ready to go.

'Here, darling,' Hannibal said, bending down, spotting his shoes under the bed. Kneeling on the floor, he slid them out, and Will held out his hand, steadying himself on Hannibal's shoulder for support. He slipped his foot in, his hand instinctively tightening for added stability, when Hannibal suddenly burst into tears.

The simple gesture of complete trust, of knowing that Hannibal was there to help him, assuming his husband would support him, broke Hannibal in shattering glass fragments. He wrapped his arms around Will's legs and sobbed.

'Hannibal?' Will dropped to the floor, pulling Hannibal into his arms.

But he couldn't stop the flood. Trying to be brave and practical had worn him entirely out. The fear, confusion, terror all building up and like a sudden dam burst, the tears flowed.

'It's okay,' Will soothed, stroking his back. 'It's all right. It's okay.'

Hannibal buried his face in Will's neck, holding him tight. 'Sorry,' he gasped. 'I… I was so scared.' He leaned back as the wretched sobs worked their way up again, tears glazing his eyes and spilling down his cheeks.

'I can't lose you, Will.' He was trembling, the sobs like broken moans. 'Don't ever leave me, don't ever go away. I can't….'

‘Hannibal, I’m right here. I’m not going anywhere. I’m not leaving you. Shhh.’ He wiped the tears from Hannibal’s cheek. ‘You’ve been bottling up all this time…’ His tender expression was full of love, as he rubbed Hannibal’s shoulders and kissed him repeatedly. Holding him tightly, Hannibal’s face pressed against Will’s chest.

‘Non posso vivere senza di te. Mai senza di te. Sei il mio tutto, Will.’

‘Shhh, it’s okay,’ Will crooned rocking him. ‘Non vado da nessuna parte. Sono qui, il mio amore.’

They spent a while on the floor, wrapped around each other. Will holding him and consoling him as his sobs quietened.

A few days later, they were on the sofa, Will laying comfortably on top of Hannibal. ‘You need to defer this semester,’ Hannibal told him, fingers stroking the back of Will’s neck. Will started to protest, face tilting up, and Hannibal silenced him with a kiss. ‘Love, it's not worth taking any chances. We don’t want a relapse. There is no harm taking the rest of this semester off and I’ve taken a leave of absence.’ Will’s mouth opened again, which Hannibal kissed again. ‘I’m staying home and looking after you.’

‘Hannibal, you couldn’t look after me more if you tried!’

‘I can and I will,’ Hannibal told him deftly.

‘Okay,’ Will said. ‘Fine.’

Will’s father stayed for another week. Will was recovering well, and Hannibal brought Max and Lady home.

The dogs were even more affectionate than usual as if sensing the mood in the house. Max clambering on the sofa and resting his head on Will’s lap. Lady huddled, on the other side like a small protective guard dog.

Hannibal looked at the three of them amused. ‘And where shall I sit?’ He picked Lady up, putting her on his lap and curled his arm around Will pulling him in close.

The four of them often dozing this way as they sat and watched tv.

Hannibal still insisted Will take it easy and wouldn’t let him do anything strenuous. He was discreetly checking Will daily for any signs of him being unwell or feverish, but thankfully Will seemed his usual peppy self.

‘What about your husbandly duties?’ Will said, sidling up to him as Hannibal brushed his teeth. They had been home for three weeks, and Hannibal had been careful not to let their short make-out sessions get too intense. He purposefully didn’t get Will worked up, tease him, or get him too excited. He would not be swayed when it came to Will’s wellbeing or health. He wanted Will to be calm and recover and heal. They had gone without any sexual activities before, almost a year after the incident with Matthew Brown.

‘When I am satisfied that you are one hundred percent, I will perform all said duties with much enthusiasm and gusto but until then…’ he pressed a flurry of kisses on Will’s indignant mouth.

In bed, Hannibal waited till he was sure Will was asleep, and only then tried to sleep himself. He couldn’t switch his brain off and kept getting flashbacks of *Will* having scans, looking pale and shaky, feverish, and sick. He couldn’t ask for forgiveness; there was to be no resolution there. The only defence being, he did not know how important *Will* would become, and how he had felt it was the right thing to do at the time. He had never actively tried to end *Will’s* life.

In turn, he tried to stop panicking as his Will was fine, and he didn’t want Will picking up on his constant anxiety. He worried that he had gotten too casual about their life, and he was right to wake up every day with fear clouding his mind.

Under the sweltering heat of summer, they went to Louisiana. Hannibal walked the dogs very early in the morning whilst Will was still in bed, and at night, they walked the dogs together, hand in hand, the air slightly cooler but still humid.

They spent a lot of time with Will’s dad and Louella and went out for a special meal for Will’s birthday. Will often wanted to go sailing, and he was very competent. However, Hannibal couldn’t help his watchful gaze drive straight to concern mode if Will so much as winced or looked tired; promptly telling Will to sit down and rest.

In the afternoons, when the heat had stemmed, Will and his father worked on making a small rowing boat from scratch. Hannibal and Louella would leave father and son to bond while they went to the food markets.

At the end of summer, Will showed him how much he had recovered by having a marathon sex session one day. He looked like an angel, with his big baby blue eyes and curly hair, but the filth that came out of that mouth when they were having sex…the strength in his arms, his legs, holding Hannibal, caving him with his body on top. He wanted Hannibal in every position, making him come multiple times. Hannibal’s legs in the air, folded back, on all fours, kneeling up. His body contorted in sexual positions he didn’t know existed. Good thing he had taken gymnastics and ballet when he was younger.

He felt like he’d been running an actual marathon, wrecked and sweaty but all he had done was take it. Take Will consuming him entirely. His stomach was quivering, muscles contracting as Will pounded into him. So deep that Hannibal felt like Will had carved a permanent space inside him. Will’s hand stroking him to completion, spurting so hard up across his chest, he caught himself on the chin. Will’s fingers inside him, his tongue lewdly licking into him full of come. He felt raw and sensitive, laying naked, limbs lax, eyes closed. Will blew a puff of warm air on his skin, his nipples, and his body tried to twitch towards another climax, rolling his hips even though he was exhausted.

Afterwards, Hannibal lay boneless and panting, covered in sweat, unable to move as Will held him, waiting for the tremors to abate. He slept very soundly that night, not stirring until morning.

They stayed until Labor Day and went to his father-in-law's for a barbecue. He invited his new shipyard colleagues, and Hannibal got irritated when one of the daughter's seemed utterly enamoured with Will. She couldn't stop gazing at him, fangirling like he was the poster boy from a boy band.

Hannibal promptly came over and pulled Will close, kissing him thoroughly. The girl squeaked in surprise, springing backwards.

'Sorry,' Hannibal said. 'My husband needed to be kissed. Can I get you some ribs?' He thrust of a plate of hot ribs at her. Politeness be damned. Looking dazed, Will tried to smother a smile.

'Possessive much?' he said, nuzzling Hannibal's neck, as the girl dashed away.

'I don't know what you mean?' He said, trying to look innocent. Will nipped his ear lobe, and he couldn't help a ticklish gasp escape.

'How do you think I feel when we go to your work parties, and they're all desperate for your attention drooling over you. They look so horrified when I come along, and they're like, "what's this guy doing with hot Dr Lecter-Graham".'

'No, they're looking at you and thinking who is this beautiful…' He kissed Will. 'Delectable.' Another kiss. 'Extraordinary man. And I say he is mine. All mine.' Hannibal bared his teeth.

Will gently bit his lower lip. 'And you're mine. All mine.'

They shared a quick heated kiss, and Will murmured, 'against the wall as soon as we get home. I'm going to climb you like a tree.' His hand brushed up Hannibal's thigh, lighting a path of flame.

When they got home, they stripped swiftly. Hannibal grabbing the lube and picked Will up, backing him against the wall. Preparing him quickly, he eased into the inviting warmth. He was thrusting in hard as he could go, supporting Will's weight in his arms. Will's legs around his waist, his arms wound around his neck, mouth open emitting grunts as his body shuddered.

Hannibal came hot and fast; slowing his thrusts as his orgasm ebbed away. He embraced Will tightly, as Will panted hot breaths against his throat. Gently lowering his husband to the ground, Hannibal dropped to his knees, taking Will in his mouth sucking, and licking exactly the way Will liked. His hands clutching Hannibal's shoulders as Hannibal gripped his bottom, fingers denting the soft flesh. Trailing his fingers in between, feeling Will wet with come, he slipped two fingers easily inside, rubbing and twisting around. Will moaned, his hips rocking as Hannibal sucked harder. The delicious breathy groans made Hannibal want to worship his beautiful love even more. Will's legs started to shake, and he muttered words of endearments.

'Hannibal, oh, god. You're so beautiful. Yes, please.'

He climaxed, knees buckling, and Hannibal held him, sucking him steadily until there was no more. The next moment, Will slumped into the circle of his arms, and Hannibal held him tightly in his lap.

Will threaded his fingers through his hair and kissed him so sweetly with, ‘I love you,’ in three different languages.

‘Will,’ he breathed. ‘My absolute love. So beautiful, my darling, my love. Myliu. Ačiū.’

Will was a vision that he couldn’t drink enough. Such a pretty picture, so divine; heavenly. He felt fierce devotion and the need to hold his darling forever.

‘Will, are you happy?’

‘Always,’ Will answered.

They went home a week before Will’s final semester began, giving him enough time to buy books and prepare for classes. Hannibal wasn’t due back to work for another two weeks.

Work for Hannibal was rewarding but not challenging. He had paved a new course for himself in this life and found that he did not miss the high adrenalin rush of the emergency room or performing high stake surgeries. His attention was on his home life, his husband. The former monster had been domesticated and was thankful for it. He still had work colleagues for dinner a few times a year, and they were always impressed by his lavish presentations. Will infrequently went out with his friends, but above all else, they both were still each other’s best friend, preferring the other’s company over anyone else’s.

‘There’s a big career fair in Washington at the end of the month…’ Will said one morning opening his post.

Hannibal leaned over his shoulder, reading the letter.

‘Mmm, there will be some head-hunters no doubt, wanting to sign up seniors fresh out of college. Do you want to go?’

‘Will you come with me?’ Will asked, crunching into his toast.

‘I don’t think they are inviting spouses, Will,’ Hannibal said with a soft smile. He knew what Will meant. He and Will had never been apart for even a single night since they had been married.

‘I dunno.’ Will shrugged.

‘See how many people are going from your class. If you feel comfortable with them, then think about it at least. It’s only two nights away, yes?’ Hannibal looked at the dates.

‘Yeah.’ Will re-read the letter. ‘Are you suggesting we’re excessively dependant on each other?’

Hannibal bent down to drop a kiss on his head. ‘No, love. I think we are perfect of course, but I don’t want it ever getting in the way of what’s best for you. If you want to go, you should. The dogs and I will be fine. It’s only for two nights, and we have cell phones. You can ring me or message me anytime you want.’

In truth, Hannibal didn’t want to be apart from Will for even one night let alone two, but if everyone from Will’s class was going, he didn’t think Will ought to miss out if a part of him wanted to go.

Will said he would see how he felt, and they didn’t discuss it for a while.

Life carried on blissfully.

Three weeks into term, Will came back from work, carrying treats for Max and Lady. ‘So, quite a few have signed up for the career fair weekend so…’ He bit his lip as he bent down to feed the dogs who came running and sliding across the wooden, kitchen floor.

Hannibal felt his heart dive but put on a big smile. ‘Well…will you have to share a room or get a room of your own? What would you prefer? We could pay more if you wanted to be alone.’

Will stood up, leaning his head on Hannibal’s chest. ‘Stupid, huh? I’m twenty-two years old and don’t want to be away from home, from you.’

Hannibal wrapped his arms around Will’s back, ‘not stupid. Never stupid.’

‘We’re… nauseating,’ Will laughed though his voice broke and Hannibal pressed several kisses on his curls. He tipped Will’s chin up and gave him a small kiss which Will turned into a bigger one.

Hannibal could see Max and Lady looking up at them. ‘What? I’m just kissing daddy.’ Will was ‘Daddy’, and he was ‘Papa’.

‘Let’s watch a horror movie tonight.’ Will suggested

After dinner, Hannibal made popcorn, and Will smiled. ‘Do you remember when we first did horror night?’

‘Yes,’ Hannibal said. ‘Of course.’

‘I was so desperately in love with you,’ Will chortled. ‘I really, really wanted you to put your arm around me.’

‘You did?’ Hannibal kissed Will’s cheek. ‘I knew you were scared and pretending not to be.’

‘Yeah, I was. Funny.’ Will said carrying the bowl of popcorn. He slid the DVD in and waited for Hannibal to get on the sofa first and then sat in between his legs, back pressed against Hannibal’s chest. They stretched their legs out, and Will threw a blanket over them.

‘Not scared now,’ Hannibal said, kissing the side of Will’s neck.

Will laced their fingers together over his stomach. ‘Being in your arms is the safest I feel.’ His neck arched back so he could turn his face to join their lips together.

Feeling content and warm and alight with happiness, Hannibal kissed Will slowly. Taking his time to feel every glide, every breath.

Lady gave a small bark, and Will chuckled into his mouth. Hannibal drew back as Will looked down at her.

He reached out his hand, and she gave it a little lick. ‘Come up.’ Will patted his legs and made a noise, causing her to leap up. She licked his face, pawing at his chest merrily and then trotted down the sofa, settling down by their feet. Max loped in and woofed at them before spreading himself out on the rug, tongue lolling out.

‘Looks like we’re ready,’ Hannibal smiled and started the movie. He kept his arms around Will, inhaling the scent of his husband’s hair. Pressing occasional kisses on his neck, Hannibal leaned back to watch the film.

The day before Will was due to leave, Hannibal walked in as Will was making dinner.

‘Chilli,’ he announced kissing Hannibal.

‘And what do I owe this honour?’

‘Because’ Will said. ‘It’s nearly done.’

‘Do I have enough time for a quick shower?’ Hannibal asked.

‘Yes, a quick one.’ Will kissed him back. ‘It just needs one more ingredient.’

Hannibal showered and dressed in pyjamas. ‘I’ll get the plates,’ he said, walking back in.

Will reached out for his hand and tugged him close. ‘Come here…’ he had a mysterious smile playing on his lips, and Hannibal creased his brows, laughing.

‘What?’

‘I need one more ingredient…’ His eyes a deep jewel blue, lips pink. Hannibal felt his heart gallop and a spike of arousal shoot through him.

‘Oh?’

‘Mmm mm,’ Will whispered undoing the drawstring on Hannibal’s pyjamas. He reached inside, palming Hannibal, rubbing him.

He instantly hardened. Hot and damp. ‘I’m the ingredient?’ his voice sounded husky.

‘We both are,’ Will said, kissing him.

Hannibal let out a moan at the idea of what Will wanted to do. He couldn't believe he hadn't thought of that before.

Will pushed him back against the island, leaning into him, uncovering them both. Will was already wet, pearly beads moistening the tip.

'No need for lube.' Will stated the obvious. 'We're slick enough.' He lined them together in his fist, and Hannibal tipped his head back as Will set a relentless pace, up and down, fast, faster. Will's body felt hot, his breath scorching against Hannibal's neck as his hand sped up.

They came within minutes panting, and Will steadied himself and caught as much of their joint release as he could from his fingers. Going over to the pot, he dropped it in and stirred the sauce.

Hannibal's eyes widened. 'Oh, mio.'

'Can we try for a bit more?' Will had a predatory look in his eyes, and Hannibal felt his knees tremble.

'More?' His stomach flipped as Will reached for the coconut oil. He stepped behind Hannibal, his foot spreading Hannibal's feet apart. Holding Hannibal tightly around the waist with one hand, his other hand with slick fingers dived in between his bottom searching, pressing, and reaching inside, stretching upwards.

The sweet spot was easy to find as Hannibal was still aroused. He gulped, dry-mouthed as Will's fingers rubbed the bundle of nerves persistently. He whimpered, his head leaning back as Will dug deeper, causing lightning jolts throughout his body.

'Will…' he moaned. His hips tried to grind on the fingers penetrating him with hard strokes. Will played him like a fine instrument, knowing exactly how to touch him, make him quiver and ecstatic with pleasure.

'Come on sugar,' Will whispered in his ear. His southern drawl was so sexy. 'That's it. Does that feel good darlin'?'

'Yes,' Hannibal panted, squeezing his eyes closed.

It didn't take long for the orgasm to build again and he came with a shudder, releasing a small amount of glistening come. Will let go of his waist and wrapped his fingers around him, milking him as his fingers continued to move inside. Hannibal let the final moments of pleasure overtake his body, jerking his hips when it got too much.

Will stopped and pressed a kiss on his neck before stepping around him and gathered the few drops, adding them to the pot. 'Pure orgasm.' Stirring again, he licked his finger with a popping sound and looked at a stunned Hannibal.

Will lowered his head and lapped the damp head before kissing it and pulling up Hannibal's bottoms. He patted him lovingly and kissed his mouth.

'Don't want you to forget the way we taste.'

Hannibal slipped his tongue in, cradling his face. ‘You never have to worry about that. I always remember the way you taste.’

‘Probably enough for leftovers for tomorrow.’ Will grinned.

The next day, he dropped Will off at the airport. Will puckered his lips and they kissed several times. ‘I love you, I love you. Te amo.’

‘I love you,’ Hannibal said. ‘Your phone’s charged, yes? And you’ve got your charger?’ Hannibal kissed the back of both of Will’s hands.

‘You’ve asked me that three thousand times. Yes, yes. And I will phone you the second I can when I land okay?’

‘When you’re settled, yes.’ They hugged each other hard.

They were ridiculous.

Will got out of the car and took his small carry-on from the boot. He was making kissy faces before he walked away. Hannibal grinned. He loved that Will was so unapologetic in showing his affection. He was never embarrassed—eyes only for Hannibal. Hannibal watched him disappear inside and waited a few minutes before leaving.

His heart twisted uncomfortably in his chest, and he tried to ignore it. He had to let Will be alone sometimes…didn’t he? It was natural to spend some time apart…surely. Couples did that. Married people did that. But being separated from Will made Hannibal feel sick.

When he got home, he took the dogs for a long walk in the park. Then went back out for a swim at the gym. Will’s flight was over four hours so wouldn’t be landing till five at least.

He had the leftover chilli for lunch with a smile that hurt his heart. The house was quiet. Of course, he had been in the house without Will but knowing he wouldn’t be back till Sunday night…made Hannibal feel lonely. He had practically spent his entire life alone, *before*. It was not missed.

He suddenly pictured Will’s face, eyes closed, in hospital and felt a hot jolt of tears. Where on earth had that come from? Such dark thoughts. His darling was fine, just in the clouds. He hated when the anxiety started to seep in. Gone was the calculating, hidden, distant Hannibal of the past; his heart was firmly on display for his Will.

Will phoned at six o'clock. ‘Hey, I’m here! In the taxi.’

Hannibal grinned all teeth at the sound of his voice. ‘Okay. The flight was all right?’

‘Yeah, it was cool, I watched a movie. It was all right. I’ll phone you from the hotel when I’m about to go to sleep. Oh no, sorry, I’ll phone you at nine? Will you still be awake? I can phone earlier if I can.’

‘Darling, whenever you can, it’s fine. Settle in and enjoy yourself. Don’t worry about me.’

‘Love you.’

‘Love you. Ciao, caro.’

Feeling happier, Hannibal let the dogs in, and they raced around the kitchen as Hannibal cleaned the fridge.

The stove.

The oven.

The drawers.

Then it was time for dinner. He had a light snack, not bothering to cook anything extravagant. He ate in the lounge on the sofa. Eating alone on the dining table felt like an alien concept.

Nearing nine, the three of them went for a long walk, which only took an hour. He watched tv when they returned but got quickly bored, so played the piano to his audience of two before going up to bed.

Max and Lady bounded up with him and scampered about as Hannibal used the bathroom. They weren’t usually allowed upstairs and were always excited to be in the bedroom.

Deciding to read, he let the dogs on the bed, Max preferring to lay across at the bottom whilst Lady took Will’s spot. Hannibal stroked her as he read his book.

He must have fallen asleep when the phone rang, and he quickly picked it up. It was one am.

‘Hey, sorry, I woke you, didn’t I?’

‘S ’fine,’ Hannibal cleared his throat.

‘How are y’all?’

‘We’re good.’

‘They’re sleeping in the bed, aren’t they?’ Hannibal let out a guilty sigh. ‘You big softie,’ Will said. Hannibal imagined his face.

‘Good evening?’

‘Yeah. Sorry, it got late. We finished dinner and then had drinks at the bar. Lots of people who are doing the stands are staying here too, so it’s good to see them. I’m trying to be social.’

‘And you’re good at it. Just relax. Where’s your roommate?’

‘Tom? He’s still downstairs. Trying to chat someone up. I said I was coming up to bed, and if he got lucky, he had to go to their room, not here.’

‘What a thought.’ Hannibal made a face.

‘There’s a tour thing that I’m going to try and do tomorrow afternoon. It's only for two hours and drives around so I thought that would be good. Then a fancy dinner and on Sunday more career fair stuff and one to one interviews.’

‘You’ll be busy, which is good.’

‘Wish you were here.’ Will’s voice lowered, and Hannibal felt warmed by the love emanating in his voice. ‘I really miss you. How am I going to sleep without you?’

‘Put a pillow next to you.’

‘Haven’t we had this conversation?’ Will laughed. ‘You think a pillow is a good substitute for you?’

Hannibal didn’t comment, preferring to listen to Will chuckle. ‘Are you ready for bed?’

‘Yes, you?’

‘Yes. Lady has taken over your spot.’ They chatted for a few more minutes, and Will yawned. ‘Sleep my love.’

On Saturday, Hannibal took the dogs to the park again. Gave them baths. Sorted out the sock drawers, the bedside drawers and tidied up papers in the office.

On Sunday he re-organised the wardrobes, watching the time move slowly.

He missed Will so much, it was like a constant stomach-ache. Emptiness lodged inside. The hours dragged by as he wasn’t meeting Will in arrivals until gone midnight by the time he came out. He tried to distract himself by mowing the lawn, weeding, watering. Refilling spices. Reading. His mind wandered as he thought of what type of job Will would choose as a career. What if his job took him away from home for more than a weekend? Hannibal decided if that were the case, he would just take an early retirement and follow Will wherever he went, working as a consultant if and when he wanted to. He knew he didn’t need to work, his inheritance and money accrued from working all these years was enough to live comfortably.

He heaved a sigh of relief when it was time to drive to the airport, and even then, he arrived too early. Sitting right in front of the gate, he kept an eye on the screen for the updated landing schedule. Will’s plane landed ten minutes early, and Hannibal stood in the middle by the barriers so Will would see him at once. Eagerly waiting for his beloved, his eyes roved every figure that appeared.

And then Will appeared, his hair mussed and looking completely adorable. It was all a bit like the movies, Will running up to him and kissing him over the barrier before rushing around and pulling him into a crushing hug, kissing him deeply.

‘Missed you,’ Will spoke against his mouth. ‘So much. Hated being away from you.’

‘Me too,’ Hannibal smiled, feeling both enormously glad and guilty as he embraced Will tightly. Not willing to let go just yet. A minute later, he became aware they were standing in

the airport being *that* couple. He picked up the carry-on case and kept his other arm around Will as they went to the car park.

When they got home, Will put his rucksack and suitcase on the side to unpack tomorrow. ‘I’ve got lots of pens, string bags and writing pads. Oh, and shot glasses.’

‘A good haul then,’ Hannibal said as they got into bed. He gladly gathered Will in his arms, snuggling him. Feeling calm as the solid presence of Will pressed into his body, their limbs tangled.

After breakfast the next morning, Will unpacked his suitcase, bringing downstairs all the bits and bobs he had accumulated over the weekend.

‘You cleaned the drawers,’ he said as he put away the new biro pens and notepads.

‘Yes, I kept busy.’

‘I know. My underwear is now sorted by colours rather than design.’ He smirked. ‘What time will you be home today?’

‘About three? I’m doing a few day ops, that’s all.’

‘Okay.’ Will kissed him. ‘Love you. I’ll be back for six.’

When Hannibal got home, he changed into comfy clothes and went into the kitchen. There was a messy pile of paper on the counter that Will had emptied from his rucksack.

Hannibal put a bundle of folded up leaflets to one side, and then separated scraps of scribbled paper, and cards from the various bits of torn tissue, hard candy, and lint. He gathered the business cards and started to sift through them when his blood chilled on the third one.

“Jack Crawford. Agent FBI” with 12.30 pm scribbled in biro on the side.

Chapter End Notes

Next time on 'My Everything:: Ghosts from the past are ever present. Some mardi gras fun and Will graduates. Bye bye California.

Thank you thank you for journeying this story with me. It's been lovely sharing it with you! x

Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

It's nearly a wrap! Extra long chapter. Full of happy feels, introspection and tender sex.

Chapter Notes

I guess this is a mini-goodbye.
This is the last chapter with Hannibal and Will in this way. I do hope you have enjoyed these versions of them! I've sure loved writing them.

The last chapter will be shorter and sort of Epiloguey.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal inhaled a sharp breath, the card bending in his hand.

Jack?

Had Will met Jack Crawford? A one-to-one interview with the man? It had to be him; it couldn't be such a coincidence that it was someone else of the same name. He unfolded the bundle of leaflets and saw the FBI logo on a few of them.

His legs felt watery, and he sat down with a thump, staring at them and the small card.

Jack bloody Crawford. His one-time friend, and although the basic friendship had not been fabricated, he hadn't thought of that name in years. Literally. What was he doing here? Why…how?

An eruption of fear crashed through him. Had Jack died too? And if yes, what did he remember or was he another ghost, like Matthew Brown with no past memories and just living life? Hannibal wished he knew the 'rules' of this world. Him being here had deviated Matthew Brown's path, had he done the same to Jack's? What if dead or undead versions of Alana and Margot or Mason, or Abel, Chilton, the Hobb's, Abigail… …. What if they started to seep in and crack his and Will's perfect safe world? What if one of them remembered? What if they told Will? Would Hannibal be enough of a good actor to pretend he didn't recognise them? But how else would he explain why he was with Will if he wasn't *supposed* to remember Will?

What should he do? There were two very bad things happening here. He put his head in his hands, trying to think. He felt helpless. The spool was unwinding just a little more. Was he about to hurtle off the cliff in a different way?

He tried to keep busy. Made dinner and sat and waited.

Will breezed in just after six, laying a kiss on Hannibal's cheek before running upstairs to the bathroom. He came down ten minutes later and put his hands on Hannibal's shoulders, massaging a few moments and then kissing his neck.

'I'm starving. I skipped lunch. What are we having?'

'Chicken and patatas bravas.'

'Yum,' Will said sniffing approvingly.

Hannibal attempted a smile. He would bring it up after dinner. Let Will eat first.

'Tell me about your day,' he asked and kept mostly quiet as Will talked about his class.

He cleared the plates, and Will sipped his drink.

'What's wrong?' Will asked. Of course, Will had picked up on his mood. He was too perceptive not to have noticed Hannibal's shadowed eyes.

'Nothing. I was sorting your papers from your rucksack and saw the business cards and leaflets.'

'Yeah?' Will looked confused.

'You had interviews?'

'Yes, three. I was going to tell you about them, well today. I—'

'A Jack Crawford from the FBI?'

'Yeah, he was really nice. He was my middle one. They were only for fifteen minutes each but—'

'What did he say?' Hannibal knew he was interrupting Will, which he never did, but he was anxious to hear what Jack had said. Had he given any sign of recognising Will?

Will shrugged. 'What do you mean? We talked about my degree. He did some kind of testy case study thing, and actually, he was impressed. Said I could give him a call when I graduated—'

'To join the FBI?' Hannibal couldn't help the bite in his voice.

'To join the training programme,' Will said slowly, his brows creasing. 'If it was a career path I was thinking about.' Will looked puzzled as he eyed Hannibal's tense body language.

‘What’s the matter?’

‘Nothing.’ Hannibal cleared his throat. He went to the sink to rinse out his glass, his back rigid. ‘Did he talk about himself?’

‘Just said he used to be in the navy and had just joined the FBI. He recently got married. But it was a short talk. It was supposed to be about—’

‘Why did you go to that stand?’ Hannibal turned to face him unsmiling.

‘Why?’ Will gave him a perplexed look. ‘Because there were lots of people going to that stand, and I was curious. I—’

‘What were the other interviews?’ Hannibal could tell he was sounding like he was interrogating Will, but he couldn’t help it. His tone was flinty and sharp.

Will gaped for a second before saying, ‘I did one for a masters in forensics psychology. We did a module on criminal psychology, and I thought it looked interesting.’

The twist of fear tightened further inside Hannibal.

‘What was the third one?’

‘Teaching.’

Hannibal was unable to draw breath, it was like trying to breathe through a pinhole. A hysterical laugh loomed dangerously close to bursting out, and he tightened his jaw.

He thought by being here, he had influenced Will’s life to go down a different path, but Will was still drawn towards the same type of careers. Was there something inherent in him that made him veer towards those professions?

Will stood up and put his hand on Hannibal’s arm. He looked worried, his eyes forest green. Hannibal averted his gaze, trying to gather himself, staring at the floor instead. ‘What’s going on?’ Will asked softly.

Hannibal exhaled heavily trying to release the tension. ‘Will,’ he began. ‘Have I ever asked you not to do something?’ He met Will’s eyes, looking deep into them.

Will frowned. ‘No—'

‘Right, well. I am now. In fact, I’m begging you. Please, please do not ever think about going into law enforcement.’

Will's mouth opened as Hannibal took him by the shoulders firmly. ‘Listen to me.’

Will was very still and watchful as if trying to read this strange new situation. Hannibal had never spoken to him quite like this.

‘I know you have certain abilities that make law enforcement appealing. Forensics, analysis, profiling, and so forth. You are doing psychology, and you have innate qualities that make you particularly attuned. But...’ Hannibal raised his brows. ‘That world is not for you. Do you understand?’

Will gave an imperceptible shake of the head. Of course, he didn’t understand. Hannibal grasped the back of Will’s neck. ‘You are filled with light Will, and that world is dark. It is really dark. It will devour you, take over your mind and fill it with thoughts you won’t be able to differentiate between the criminals, the victims or your own…’

Hannibal saw the photos of murders in his mind's eye. The crimson spatters, and *Will* covered in blood, *Will* having a hard time separating the murderer's thoughts from his own, *Will* zoning out on crime scenes.

‘Teaching middle school, high school, even college students, fine. Or maybe think about animal behaviour. Ethology. Comparative psychology. You're wonderful with dogs and most animals. I want you to choose a career that will bring you joy Will, and be happy. All these…’ He waved a hand towards the leaflets and Jack’s card on the counter. ‘They are dark professions. You are a helper and giver, Will. I know this. But there are so many other ways for you to use your talents. Please, please, I beg you. Don’t ever go down this route. I don’t want you to.’

Will looked shell shocked as Hannibal leaned in. ‘Please, Will.’

‘Hannibal—'

‘Please, Will.’ And then his face crumpled, and he felt hopeless tears spark. Could Will comprehend the seriousness of what he was saying? His eyes lowered, and he drew in a shaky breath.

‘Hey.’ Will tipped his face up. ‘Hannibal…’ Will hugged him hard; he hadn’t realised he was shaking.

‘Sorry.’ How else to explain it? ‘It will be cataclysmic Will. I can feel it. Your empathy will leave you wide open to misuse and taken advantage of. Your good nature will get the better of you, you will get hurt. You’ll bring your work home into our house, our lives. Trust me, please believe me.’ His voice broke. ‘Don’t go near it…I can’t… just… please… don’t… ever.’

‘Hannibal,’ Will pleaded. ‘Stop, calm down. Shh.’ He rubbed the back of his neck and pressed his lips to Hannibal’s cheek. ‘I haven’t even thought of career paths really, like in a serious way. This was just an opportunity to look forward to graduation and think ahead. You encouraged me to go…’

‘I know, darling,’ Hannibal said against Will’s neck. He wound his arms around Will’s waist, clutching him close. ‘And you should think about that yes, but not the FBI, not law enforcement, nothing criminal. Quantico, teaching agents, classes on profiling. No, never, please. Stay away from all that.’

Will chewed on his bottom lip for a moment before nodding. ‘Okay.’ He said simply. ‘If it means that much to you and has you this stressed, then yes, okay. I won't.’

‘Promise, angelo mio.’ Hannibal grasped his words eagerly. ‘Promise on us?’

Will’s eyes widened at such a request. Hannibal had never said such a thing, and he could tell Will was alarmed. ‘Yes,’ he said. ‘I promise. Never.’

Hannibal let out a thankful sigh, his shoulders sagging.

Will gently untangled himself. ‘Here.’ He picked up Jack’s card along with the leaflets for the FBI and forensics. He tore them up and pressed the pedal for the bin, raining them down in the open top. ‘Gone? All right?’

Hannibal’s body visibly shivered, and he willed himself not to weep in relief. He had already concerned Will, which he hadn't meant to do, but he was beside himself with worry—trying to hold onto a string of a flying kite swept up in a tornado.

Will kissed him softly, his hands cupping Hannibal’s face, thumbs stroking soothingly. ‘You never ask of me anything and if it means so much to you then fine. I won't. If you really don’t think these are career paths I should follow, I won't. If you don’t think they would be good for me, then I believe you. Okay?’

Hannibal nodded gratefully. ‘Thank you, darling. You know I always want the best for you. Your happiness means everything to me.’

‘I know.’

‘Sei tutto per me. Cuore mio. Amore mio.’

‘Hannibal, si. Sei l'amore della mia vita. Solo tu.’

Will kissed him again. Eyes the colour of the sea lanced in blue. Hannibal felt wretched for stamping out any passion that was kindling for such pathways in Will, but he had to insist. He had no choice. It was for the best.

Surely.

In this life, Hannibal would never tempt to draw Will towards darkness. The small part of Will that was coloured in black on the edges…if it were to peel back slowly...

No.

Hannibal would actively close all doors to that arena, and do everything to keep Will far far away from there. He had a responsibility to their relationship. He was the guardian; he felt responsible for Will’s health, his mental health, his wellbeing. Hannibal would do everything he could to ensure his Will was the happiest and healthiest he could be, untouched by toxicity. Protecting and looking after Will was his absolute priority, everything else paled in comparison; his urges and bloodlust dampened as Will was the precursor of everything.

Will had led a life of loneliness, depression, and neglect, and even then, he had managed to be a kind, empathetic being. However, the lure of the shadows got too much and clouded his blue skies a thunderous grey; Hannibal encouraging him to walk along the ledge and pushing him over.

Having had time to think over the years, he knew what his and *Will's* similarities and differences were. Similarities of wanting to be seen and not judged, recognised, embraced, and enjoyed; their full natures revealed to one another.

The differences, well…If *Will* had lived and joined him to be the 'murder husbands' they had so fondly been called by Freddie Lounds, the bloodshed would have eventually caught up with him, if Hannibal did nothing to stop him from being overwhelmed. His righteous anger victorious for a time, but his moral compass and sense of justice would conflict and contradict.

He would *never* be at peace.

No matter how much he participated, indulged, and surrendered to his alter ego.

He was not like Hannibal. His conscience and empathy would be tormented and unable to control the creeping madness that would start to fester and eat away at him like acid. Ultimately, it would destroy him. That path was laid out for *Will* if Hannibal chose not to put *his* wellbeing above the kills and have *Will* by his side.

He had the potential to become a worse *mostro* than Hannibal.

Ideally, he wished that his love for *Will* would prevail, but he couldn't be sure. Holding *Will's* dead body had been the turning point for him, but he couldn't be certain if they had lived, what he would have done to *Will.* How would he have treated him? That was the honest truth.

Either way, Hannibal had to make sure *his* Will was protected from himself. He didn't want Will empathising with killers and criminals and putting himself in their shoes. He could not be allowed to enter that world. Be polluted by it. Hannibal couldn't let that happen.

He wouldn't.

Will spoke of it no more.

The rest of the year spanned in a happy haze. Will had his monitoring check-up and was given a clean bill of health. He had to see his doctor again in six months to which he replied he lived with a doctor and was checked, 'all the time' with lots of eye rolls.

For Hannibal's birthday, Will booked him a massage so he could be out of the house while Will cooked a special meal. Filet mignon with garlic butter hassle back potatoes and asparagus, accompanied with a lovely cabernet and chocolate mousse for dessert. He had bought roses and set the table with candles and soft music in the background.

Hannibal was moved to tears when he saw Will wearing an apron looking anxious when he saw his face.

‘What’s the matter? Did I make it wrong?’

Hannibal shook his head, unable to speak as he slid his arms around Will’s waist. He hugged him tightly, his hand cradling Will’s head and pressing dozens of kisses on his face.

‘It’s perfect, you are perfect. I love you so much. You’re so sweet. Thank you.’

‘Je t’aime, mon chèri,’ Will said looking happy.

Will sang him Happy Birthday with a firework candle atop a cream cupcake, and further gifted him with a maroon tie with dogs on it tied in a red satin bow.

‘I feel very spoiled,’ Hannibal said as they took their mousses into the lounge. He sat on the sofa with Will sitting astride his lap, feeding him dessert punctuated with kisses.

Afterwards, Will undressed first and then undressed Hannibal slowly. With a twinkle in his eye, he got out the lube and liberally slicked Hannibal’s attentive erection and two of his own fingers. Hannibal watched enthralled as Will’s fingers disappeared inside his body, in and out a few times before coming onto the sofa.

Slowly lowering himself onto Hannibal, Will clutched his shoulders as he flexed his thighs. Taking a moment to seat himself comfortably, Will began to rise up and down ever so slightly, kissing Hannibal; fingers tangling in his hair.

‘One, two, three…’ Will kissed him until he reached thirty-two.

Hannibal groaned, his hips thrusting up. ‘I’m going to have a lot of fun when I turn sixty and seventy.’

Will chuckled as he moved his hips around and up and down, angling in such a way that made his eyes close and sigh.

Mesmerised, Hannibal held onto him, feeling every hot slide, the tight heat, Will’s soft touches. They were so closely pressed together, the friction eliciting groans as they moved as one, and moaned into each other’s mouths as they came. Shivering in ecstasy, Hannibal stroked Will’s back, pressing kisses onto his neck and shoulders. Not letting go for a long time.

At the end of the year, approaching the new millennium, they went for a week to the cabin to have a mini-Christmas by themselves with Max and Lady, before flying to Lithuania for the holidays with Will’s father. Hannibal’s aunt and uncle and Chiyoh met them there as the renovations at Lecter Castle had finished and he wanted Will to see his childhood home. Finally, that part of his life had come full circle, and they welcomed the year 2000 with a New Year’s Eve party and plenty of fireworks.

(Holiday Outtake Chapter)

While away, there had been a conversation about Hannibal’s aunt teaching him Katana sword fighting and the gruelling exercise schedule she had insisted on when he was doing ballet,

gymnastics, and Ju-jitsu. Will intrigued, had asked to see a ‘performance’ and had been amazed when they showed him a short demo.

When they returned home, Will wanted Hannibal to teach him basic self-defence. Hannibal agreed and bought large exercise mats for the lounge, clearing the area to practise.

‘Hannibal, you can’t kiss me every time I block a move,’ Will scolded. Hannibal had attempted a fake punch which Will caught deftly, and delighted, Hannibal swept him up into a breathless lip lock.

‘Who said? Anyway, you need positive reinforcement,’ he rumbled against Will’s mouth.

‘Oh yeah?’ Will said and then kicked Hannibal’s legs from beneath him, and they both landed on the mat. ‘Maybe seduction should be my superpower,’ Will teased. ‘I’ll draw them in and then jab ‘em.’

‘I’ll crack their skull first,’ Hannibal said, smoothing back the chocolate curls from Will’s face.

Will had decided to spread his last semester across the year so had a lighter load of assessments. He wanted to take Hannibal to his first Mardi Gras, and they booked a hotel for themselves and Will’s father and Louella.

On the morning of, they got dressed, wearing matching outfits. With a smouldering look, Will undid the top buttons from Hannibal’s tight shirt as they were about to leave. His muscles filling the material in such a way that Will didn’t let him out of the room for another half an hour and they had to get dressed again.

They eventually battled through the crowds and found Louella and Will’s father on the main parade route near the start. Hannibal enjoyed watching the floats and walking crews dancing past. By the end, their necks were weighed down with necklaces consisting of round beads, square beads, silvers, golds, pinks, turquoise. They stepped off for a lunch of jambalaya, and beers.

‘Boys, we have to tell you something,’ Will’s father said. He was looking merry and red in the face. Will glanced at Hannibal, who shrugged slightly. ‘I’ve asked Louella to marry me, and she said yes!’

Louella gave a little cry and held out her hand, an engagement ring sparkling.

‘Dad!’ Will shot out of his seat and gave his father a big hug. ‘I’m so happy for you.’

He kissed Louella on the cheek.

‘Welcome to the family,’ Hannibal said warmly. ‘Congratulations to you both.’

‘Aww you boys, thank you darlin’s.’ Louella beamed. ‘I’m so happy.’ She looked at Will’s father, and he seemed exultant, leaning in to give his fiancé a quick kiss.

Will wore a big smile, and Hannibal reached for his hand and kissed it. Will's father had not been like this *before*, and Hannibal couldn't help feeling he had contributed to this happy divergence somehow.

In the evening they watched the night parades, and Will and Hannibal went off separately to a street party. A dizzying montage of colour, music, drinking and they danced till three in the morning.

Engrossed with kissing each other hungrily, Hannibal's eyes opened briefly to catch a glimpse of a man standing back in the shadows, by the side of the building. Hannibal thought he was looking directly at them, and squinted for a moment, thinking the man looked like…

But then he was gone, a passing mirage. Hannibal blinked a few times, narrowing his eyes but there was nothing. He looked around and felt compelled to make sure it was a figment of his imagination but didn't want to let go of Will.

Keeping an eye out, he hoped he hadn't consumed too much beer and stopped at two to make sure he was sober and aware of his surroundings. He held Will's hand like they were surgically attached, only letting go once they were in their room.

In spring, the police contacted Will to say Matthew Brown had been released. Though Will was trying to hide it, Hannibal could see that he was unsettled. The thought of Matthew Brown free and wandering around made Hannibal's rage deluge his bloodstream.

Even though there was a restraining order in place, something about him being free felt uncomfortable. Hannibal spent a sleepless night watching over Will in case he had bad dreams, though Will didn't suffer that way, unlike *Will.*

He shifted slightly, resting his chin on top of Will's head. It would be so easy to seek Matthew Brown out and dispense of him, so he was no longer in the background. Hannibal fought the urge like swallowing bile and suggested a short break.

'I have exams in three weeks,' Will said.

'Take your books with you. We can leave on Thursday night and then you have reading week anyway. We can return on Sunday, so you're back in time for revision classes before the exams.'

Will looked unsure as Hannibal reached for his hand, his thumb gently kneading Will's palm.

'Where do you want to go?' Will asked.

Somewhere far away, warm, blue.

'Riviera.'

The short vacation had been an excellent idea. Just what Hannibal needed. He knew he wouldn't actually find the boy and kill him, but the desire to was hard to kerb. The distance created by water and distraction was a welcome reprieve, and Will seemed to be enjoying himself too.

They rented a yacht for the week, and Will often sat on the deck surrounded with his books while Hannibal drank wine and sketched his lovely husband or the beautiful scenery around them.

One day, the midday sun was at its peak, and Will took a break, donning on his sunglasses. He threw off his T-shirt leaving on white shorts as he laid back on the deck sofa bed. Hannibal couldn't help giving lusty glances. Will's toned chest looked kissable; his bare legs crossed over the ankles. He looked relaxed and peaceful, and Hannibal resisted for as long as he could but then gave up and gravitated to his husband's side.

He picked up Will's foot, kissing it, the arch resting in his palm.

Will jerked slightly. 'Are you trying to tickle me?' He raised himself on his elbows, lowering his sunglasses.

'No,' Hannibal said. Tickling was not what he had in mind, and his lips trailed over the instep, reaching the ankle. He lowered Will's foot, his fingers dancing up his calf towards the knee.

'Hannibal…' Will chastised. 'We're in public, doctor.' He bit his lower lip; his breathing laboured as their eyes met.

Hannibal's fingers trailed higher, reaching the hem of Will's shorts halfway up his thigh. 'We better get inside then,' he growled. 'Before I do things that will scandalise our neighbours.'

'Yeah?' Will sighed, tipping his head back as Hannibal's finger teased beneath the material.

'You're not wearing anything underneath these shorts, are you?' Hannibal felt his throat constrict with desire.

Will licked his lips. 'Nope, too hot.'

'We better get inside right now Will, because I am about to ravage you.'

'Promise?' Will challenged teasingly.

'Always.' Hannibal loomed over him and picked him up bodily, backing him into the cabin and closing the door.

When they surfaced, after spending nearly an hour making love to Will with his tongue and fingers, Hannibal wondered how soundproof the yacht was judging by the blushing looks of their neighbours as they walked past.

After dinner, Will decided to take his books down to the beach, and Hannibal took a long walk, coming back as Will stepped out of the bathroom. Naked. Perfectly at ease in his skin. Hannibal loved his confidence.

'My King, I have returned,' he said, putting down his key card.

‘Hannibal, you can’t say stuff like that!’ Will always looked amused and embarrassed whenever Hannibal said *stuff like that.*

‘It’s fine, the French police have given me permission,’ Hannibal teased. ‘You had another shower?’

‘Yeah, sand everywhere.’ Will answered as he padded towards the drawers, pulling out his pyjamas. Hannibal caught his hand and tugged him into his arms.

‘No, no. No getting dressed.’

‘No?’ Will asked.

The balcony doors were open, and the warm breeze brushed past the palms over the port, nudging the curtains ever so. The light cream of the luxurious room, the twinkling black sky outside, a nude husband; Hannibal felt poetically amorous.

He sat down on the chair by the desk, pulling Will onto his lap. His nose scenting Will’s skin which smelt divine, his body soft and damp after the hot shower.

Hannibal wrapped his arms around him, his back pressing against Hannibal’s chest. He kissed the back of Will’s neck.

‘Cold?’

‘Nope,’ Will said, dropping his head to give Hannibal more skin to kiss. His palms roamed over Will’s chest, then further down, one hand gliding over his knee trailing inwards, the other caressing his nipples.

Will puffed out a breath, as Hannibal hooked his ankles around Will’s, spreading his legs, and causing Will’s thighs to part wide.

His short, manicured nails were lightly scraping the hardened nipples, and Will let out a whine. Hannibal continued to nibble his neck, his other hand cupping Will between his legs.

‘Hannibal…’

‘That’s it, darling. Just relax. Enjoy it, my love. That’s it,’ Hannibal crooned. His fingers enclosing Will’s hard length in his fist, his thumb rubbing over the pink, engorged wet tip, sliding up and down.

Will lifted his hips, his hands reaching behind and squeezing Hannibal’s bottom, trying to raise him upwards in time to his strokes.

Hannibal groaned, the two pieces of cloth between his skin and Will was not much of a barrier. With Will grinding on his lap and moaning, Hannibal didn’t need much to shudder to a climax in his shorts. Will let out a cry as he came, Hannibal tweaking his nipple and sucking love bites into his neck.

They sat for a moment, huffing slightly, hazy with pleasure. Hannibal licked his hand, and still feeling greedy, got up, lifting Will with him, and flinging him lightly onto the bed. Will put his arms above his head as Hannibal got out the lube from the drawer and crawled over him. He started to kiss Will's chest, lapping at the wet release on his stomach.

He picked Will's leg up, pushing it up towards his chest as he kissed between his legs, going lower and kissing his entrance. Will let out a deep groan as Hannibal draped Will's legs over his shoulders and buried his face deeper, his tongue pushing in as Will arched up.

Will's moans spurring him on, he paused for a moment, slicking two fingers generously before pushing them inside. His hot breath teasing Will above.

'Your mouth, please.' Will keened, letting out a strangled whimper. Hannibal at once engulfed him, his lips closing around him, warm and wet. It was too soon for Will to harden completely, but he gallantly tried, filling Hannibal's mouth a bit more.

'Oh, god.' Will squirmed, his hands now down by his side, fists gripping the sheets. His hips danced, wriggling as Hannibal gripped his bottom, holding him open. 'Harder.'

That meant harder everything. Suck harder, drive fingers in harder. And in a few minutes, Will let out a shout as his body shuddered from another orgasm, breaking into a sweat, wetting Hannibal's tongue with a few drops. He slowed his fingers as Will soared back down.

'Jesus fuck,' Will panted. Hannibal crowded over Will's body, dipping down to lick his jaw. Will caught his face, kissing him, their lips crashing in desperate need for more contact, drawing each other's air deep inside. They could kiss for hours, lips aching and sore—the slip and slide. Contact, breath mingling, tongues lapping.

Hannibal trailed a hand down Will's chest. 'So beautiful darling.' He gazed adoringly at his husband. 'Thank you,' he said softly. 'I do so enjoy you.'

Will smiled at him, stroking his hair. 'You need to get naked now so I can show my full appreciation.'

Hannibal chuckled and showered him with kisses.

Over the next few days, they went to the spa for a couple's massage; swam beneath the waterfalls, jet-skied, went horse riding on the beach in the moonlight, ate at Michelin star restaurants and it seemed the perfect getaway until the last night when Will's father rang the hotel.

'Hannibal, hello.'

'Hello,' he said slowly. 'Is everything all right?' His father-in-law sounded strained. Will was downstairs on the yacht revising, and Hannibal was alone in the room.

'The police just rang.'

'Okay.'

‘That boy Brown.’ He cleared his throat. ‘He’s dead.’

‘Dead?’ Hannibal frowned.

‘Yeah, he’d been drinking. They found a high level of alcohol, and it looks like he fell off the bridge. Drowned, I guess.’

‘Um,’ Hannibal felt at a loss for words. Matthew Brown had only been out one week. ‘Well, that’s the end of it then.’

‘You’ll let Will know.’

‘Of course.’

‘I was going to wait, but then thought I would rather do it than the police phoning and telling Will.’

‘That’s fine,’ Hannibal replied. ‘Thank you. We’ll ring when we get back.’

He decided to tell Will after dinner and watched as his face shuttered down. He was still very quiet as he slipped under the covers at bedtime. Hannibal propped himself on his elbow, curving his other arm around Will, pulling him in close against his body.

‘What are you thinking?’

Will shook his head. ‘Nothing.’ His eyes dropped down.

‘Hey.’ Hannibal stretched over him, lifting his chin. ‘Are you okay?’

‘Yep,’ Will said a little too quickly. His eyes looked unfocused as if he were watching an invisible film instead of Hannibal.

He slipped his hand behind Will’s neck, feeling a deep blistering pain at how fragile it felt. The soft curls crushing in his fingers like feathers, his palm over Will’s throat, the pulse beating madly. Hannibal stroked over it soothingly.

‘Will, it’s me. It’s just you and me. Look at me.’

Will blinked a few times, his chest rising heavily with each breath. He suddenly looked achingly young, and Hannibal’s heart constricted. He sharply recalled the bruises on Will’s wrists, his bleeding lip, his pale face.

He picked up Will’s hand and kissed the memories of the marks gone. He did the same with his other wrist—delicate kisses worshipping his darling.

Safe. Safe. Safe.

Hannibal pressed the words into Will’s skin. His lips gentle and reverential.

‘I love you. It’s okay. It’s okay,’ he murmured, placing more kisses on Will’s lips, his cheeks, into his hair. Will buried his face against Hannibal’s chest, and Hannibal gathered him close, rocking him comfortingly, keeping him secure and warm in his arms.

The living spectre of Matthew Brown was erased from this world.

Will had another check-up and was given an all-clear again. Hannibal insisted he keep the six months checks for peace of mind and Will didn’t make a fuss.

He came home one evening, to find Will reading in the bath, covered in frothy bubbles.

‘Hello, my beautiful husband,’ he grinned, bending down for a wet humid kiss. ‘Bubbles?’

‘Yup,’ Will said.

‘You like your bubble baths, don’t you?’ He picked up a handful and blew them gently towards Will. Will closed the book and leaned over, putting it on the floor.

He smiled sweetly up at Hannibal, looking flushed with heat. His wet hair was curling slightly again. Blue, blue eyes blinking adorably.

‘I always wanted bubble baths when I was younger, but dad hardly filled the tub, and even then, it was a five-minute scrub with hair washed and out. I always wanted to stay and play with a toy boat.’

Hannibal loosened his tie and rolled his sleeves up. Sitting on the stool, he reached for a flannel. Will leaned forward, and Hannibal washed his back.

‘Did you ever get your toy boat?’

‘No.’ Will smiled resting his head on his knees, face angled towards Hannibal.

He ran the flannel up and down Will’s back for another minute, and Will sighed, closing his eyes. Hannibal pressed a kiss on his forehead.

‘Lean back.’

Will straightened his legs, leaning back, his head on the bath cushion.

Hannibal squirted gel on the cloth and rubbed it across Will’s shoulders, his neck, his chest. Going lower.

Will opened his eyes, a cheeky grin on his face. ‘I’ve already washed down there, Dr L. Graham.’

‘I’m just checking.’ Hannibal gave a jaunty smile, his folded sleeve touching the top of the water as his hand dove between Will’s legs. The flannel was soon forgotten, floating up to the side.

Will inhaled shakily, as Hannibal gently caressed him, feeling him harden and throb.

He withdrew his hand, and Will opened his eyes, looking up at him, wetting his lips. Silent. Hannibal felt a rush of fondness. Will so trusting, knowing that Hannibal would always bring him to orgasm once he was aroused. That he wouldn't have to wait to be satiated unless he denied himself, because Hannibal would never deny him pleasure.

He unknotted his tie, slipping it off under Will's sensuous gaze. He grinned as he undressed, and Will's cheeks seemed to redden even more as Hannibal got in the bath with him.

Scooting closer, he bent Will's knees, sitting in the middle of them, leaning forward to kiss him. Wet and slippery. The heat rising from the water, the smell of vanilla and citrus surrounding them.

'Come here, darling,' he said as he curved one arm around Will's waist, pulling him forward. He lifted Will's leg and draped it over the side of the tub.

Will's eyes widened, and he smothered a wobbly laugh as if readying himself for what was to come and hung his other leg over the side—grasping the top of the tub with both hands. Hannibal raised his bottom higher skimming the surface of the water. Sliding him backwards, Will's head rested on the cushion again with Hannibal supporting his body, his thighs parting wide.

Such a delectable and erotic sight as Will's eyes burned into him. He felt desire run hot and wild, feeling rabid. Lowering his head, mouth opening wide, he swallowed as much as he could of Will, deep in his throat, listening to the glorious sounds.

This was truly the only way ever to eat Will. To consume him. Hannibal was addicted, obsessed. Absolutely obsessed.

Will came a minute later with a sharp cry, and a low moaning howl as Hannibal continued to run his tongue up and down and around, his mouth warm and full. He only drew away once Will had softened. His lips grazed lower, tongue darting out and lapping and pushing in for a moment before pulling away to nuzzle him, kissing several times, breathing him in.

Will made a contented sound as Hannibal gently drew his legs back into the bath. He got on his knees, coming forward, pushing Hannibal towards the other end of the tub.

'I'd like to reciprocate.' His touch was tantalising.

Hannibal kissed him appreciatively, tongue slipping in, letting Will taste himself.

'And later you can drill me hard.'

Will let out a bark of laughter. 'Hannibal!'

'Sorry, that was much too crude. Would you prefer screwing?'

Will was grinning, and Hannibal chuckled, tilting in for another kiss.

They were both ravenous for one another.

Will turned twenty-three the week of his graduation, and Hannibal and his father, and fiancé watched him get his degree. Will's eyes seeking him out in the crowd and grinned widely giving him a thumbs up. Hannibal and Louella gave piercing whistles, and he waved back, looking thrilled.

That weekend, Hannibal threw him a triple celebratory party as not only was it his birthday, but it was also his graduation and their fifth wedding anniversary.

Hannibal was thankful every day for Will, such a beautiful and precious gift bestowed upon him. So grateful for their time together, he knew he would be eternally indebted to *Will* for making this dream possible. If he hadn't met *Will*, he would never have met his Will. And how awful it was that *Will* had to die for Hannibal to have met another version of him.

For the party, they hired a karaoke machine, and Will and Hannibal belted out a pretty good version of *"Baby, come to me"* singing dotingly at one another with big smiles, buzzing slightly with alcohol.

Will had a better voice than him, and they laughed and giggled their way through it, dancing around each other as their guests clapped and whooped.

"Baby, come to me, let me put my arms around you . This was meant to be, and I'm oh so glad I found you, Need you ev'ry day, gotta have your love around me, Baby, always stay 'cause I can't go back to livin' without you"

Will dipped Hannibal for a big kiss at the end, and Louella whistled enthusiastically.

Hannibal had made Will's favourite; a three-tier chocolate cream and orange sponge cake and wrapped in each other's arms, they cut it together.

'I love you so much,' Hannibal said, kissing his husband firmly. Will kissed him back deeply as their guests twittered, and grinning Will fed Hannibal a piece of cake which they ate together in another kiss.

Then Hannibal had a surprise for Will and in the middle of the crowd, took his hand for two slow dances, *"Dirty Dancing's Hungry Eyes"* and, *"Robin Beck's The Very First Time"* courtesy of Will's father and the sound system.

Will clapped a hand over his mouth. 'I can't believe you remembered,' he said, looking amazed. He was blushing and indescribably pleased as Hannibal slid his arms around his waist.

'Of course, I remembered.' Hannibal looked at him tenderly, kissing him gently as they slow danced. Will's father and Louella joined them as did a few other couples.

'I still have it. In my keepsake box.'

Will looked delighted and gave him a blinding smile that still stunned Hannibal after all these years.

He recalled the moment when Will had given him the mix-tape. It had been a week after Will had kissed him. The phone rang seven-fifteen am, and Hannibal was having his breakfast.

'Hi,' a breathless Will said. 'Um, can I come over before school? I have something to give you.'

'Yes, of course. Is everything all right?' Hannibal asked.

'Yeah,' Will said. 'I'll see you in like fifteen minutes. I'm gonna bike over.'

Hannibal quickly changed out of his pyjamas and went down, opening the front door as Will pitched his bike against the fence. Will came into the hallway looking nervous, clutching his backpack.

Hannibal kissed him on his forehead. 'What would you like to give me?'

Will smiled nervously and unzipped his bag, taking out a cassette case. Hannibal recognised Will's handwriting on the folded insert.

'I made you a mix-tape,' Will said, giving it to him.

Hannibal felt his heart turn to mush. 'Thank you. That's very sweet of you.'

'Will you listen to it?' Will said, looking earnest.

'Of course, I will,' Hannibal said touched. He took Will's hand kissing it. 'Thank you.'

'Hannibal…' Will shuffled his feet. 'I chose the songs really carefully.'

'I'll listen to every word,' he promised.

Will looked thrilled and tilted his face up, looping his slender arms around Hannibal's neck and giving him a sweet kiss.

'I'll see you Saturday,' he said grinning and waved a quick goodbye before opening the door and leaping down the step.

Hannibal watched him bike away, and his chest quivered. He went into the study and put the cassette in the tape deck. He read the names of the songs and ran a hand over his face, closing his eyes. The intensity of his feelings and warm affection for his little love was overpowering, and he laughed feeling humbled and awed. It was the first time anyone had made him a mix-tape of love songs.

Now seven years later, they were dancing to the first two songs, wearing secret smiles and chuckling amid kisses.

After a barbecue-style buffet, Will danced with Louella and a few of his friends.

As *Jamiroquai's "Canned Heat"* blared out from the speakers, the bass thumping the ground, Hannibal sat next to his father-in-law. Mopping his brow with a napkin, he gratefully gulped

down a glass of iced water.

‘Great party,’ the man drawled. His southern twang was always pleasant to hear, and more prominent than Will’s.

‘Yes, it made sense to celebrate it all at the same time and have everyone attend.’

His father-in-law was holding a beer bottle and took a light swig. ‘You know,’ he said. ‘I had my reservations when you both went off and got married.’

‘I was aware, yes,’ Hannibal said. ‘It was not my intention for you to feel uncomfortable, but I did understand the sentiment.’

‘I know you did. I’d never seen this side to you and couldn’t imagine how you would live as a couple. You were always so polite and proper. Not stuck up, mind.’ He laughed. ‘But I did wonder. Though the more I saw you together, it was easy to see. I’ve never seen a couple so madly in love as you two.’

Hannibal couldn’t help a smile escape as he looked at his husband waving his hands about, in exaggerated dance moves.

‘You’ve been real good to him,’ Will’s father continued. ‘He’s so happy. I did worry about him when he was younger. Such a shy and unsure little thing. I…’ He sighed. ‘I didn’t always manage him well. It was hard after his mother…’ He went silent for a moment. ‘But…you made a real difference. Maybe he just needed someone who understood him.’

‘He was a wonderful boy,’ Hannibal said. ‘And he has turned into a wonderful man. I’m lucky that he chose to love me.’

They went silent for a moment looking at their respective partners. Louella, whom Will’s father often called ‘*cher*’ lovingly, was teaching them all line dancing.

‘We’ve known each other a long while now, and only if you wanted to...’ His father-in-law waved a hand and looked almost embarrassed but persevered. ‘You could call me dad if you like.’ He rushed the words at the end.

Hannibal felt his throat tighten with emotion. What a bizarre turn of events to be of similar age to his father-in-law when he had died the first time.

‘That’s very thoughtful of you,’ he managed to say. He was suddenly feeling overwhelmed.

‘*Dad*’ patted him on his shoulder. ‘Only, if you’re comfortable son, but I’d sure like it.’

‘Thank you… *Dad*,’ he said, trying out the word. Both snickered, and for the first time, Dad drew Hannibal in a gruff hug and kissed him on the head. Hannibal patted Dad’s hand affectionately.

They chatted for a while and got talking about wedding dates. Hannibal offered their large garden in Louisiana. They could make it look lovely with the help of a wedding planner and

caterers, Hannibal and Will's wedding gift. His father-in-law looked shocked, and there was a flash of moisture in his eyes.

'That would be perfect,' he said sounding choked. 'Thank you.'

Hannibal joined his husband on the dance floor for a few more songs before the party ended.

It really had been a wonderful evening, though all of Hannibal's evenings were wonderful with Will. To have known him since he was thirteen years old, become his friend, and to watch him grow up into a beautiful, beautiful man—his husband. It was an honour.

That night they made love, kissing every part of each other and stroking skin tenderly, uttering soft words. Hannibal laid back as Will slotted in between his legs. Opening himself wider as Will pressed forward and smoothly slid in and out with a steady pace that hit the pleasured nerves constantly. Digging in deeper until Hannibal's shoulders dug into the mattress with the force of Will's body, moving them up and down the bed.

'Darling,' Hannibal urged. 'Just like that, my love. Right there. Yes.'

He thrust his hips up, opening wider, pulling Will down onto him, so they were touching every part of their body as much as possible. Kissing him, keeping their lips joined as they gasped, the slow climax mounting. Reaching around, Hannibal pressed two slick fingers inside Will and his mouth opened in ecstasy, his neck arched in pleasure, which Hannibal instantly nuzzled and kissed.

Trying to prolong their lovemaking, they slowed down every now and again to then pick-up pace building the pleasure higher and higher like a surge of electricity until it was upon them. Hannibal's internal muscles spasmed and he breathed through it, loving the way his body clenched around Will, his thighs trembling, his heart pounding. He always felt a little lightheaded afterwards, his eyes closing, and his whole body going limp.

Silken with sweat, Will nestled his face into Hannibal's neck, giving him small kitten licks among kisses. He was still semi-hard, and Will held him in his hand, eventually stroking him to full arousal again.

This time, they turned on their sides, and Hannibal spooned Will, rocking into him with gentle stabs, his chest flush against Will's back, their arms entwined. Will slanted his face to drag their lips wetly together as Hannibal drove into him again and again.

Gripping Will, he circled his hips, and Will moaned pushing back to get him further inside. 'Harder, Hannibal. Please.'

It took a few more strokes until they came again, and Will held onto him, not willing to let him slip out. Hannibal tried to stay inside for as long as he could, not moving except to kiss the back of Will's shoulder, his neck, sucking behind his ear.

Panting, they crushed together, hands laced, eventually dozing off feeling warm and sated.

An hour later, Will stirred, pressing his bottom into Hannibal's body, waking him up. He had remained partly inside Will and reached his fingers down, spreading him open. They were both still wet from before, and Hannibal nudged further in, kissing the back of Will's head, his nose buried in his curls.

'I want to feel you get hard inside me.' Will whispered. The words like magic made Hannibal fill out, the blood pumping as he lengthened inside Will.

Will gasped, moaning as Hannibal got harder and started to move. 'Always, softly, gently.'

The curtains were still open, and the moon was shining brightly onto their bed. Their love quiet, intimate, and sacred in the dead of night. Feeling in liquid love, Hannibal's hands skated up and down over Will's body, finally settling around his throbbing heat. Stroking him in time with his own thrusts, he came with a pleasurable jolt, moments before Will spurted hotly in his fist.

'I hope we have sex like this forever,' Will said afterwards, as they drew lungful's of air back in. 'Never stop wanting me.'

'I will never stop desiring you, my darling. It is not possible.'

They laid tangled for a few minutes before Will shifted and Hannibal slipped out of his body. He turned over, so they were face to face, his fingers stroking Hannibal, his chin, cheekbones, tracing his mouth.

'You're so beautiful. Like a carved statue but made of flesh and blood and alive.' Will brushed their lips together. 'I feel like you were made for me.'

Hannibal's heart squeezed. 'Caro, I *was* made for you. Just took a little while to find you.' *A lifetime*. Tears filled his eyes. 'Were *you* made for me?' His words steeped in tenderness.

'Yes,' Will said, without hesitation. 'I was made for you. Always you.'

Hannibal's cheeks were wet as he pulled Will into a hug, smothering his face with devoted kisses.

'I'm so proud of you.'

Will's expression was gentle, as his fingers caressed Hannibal's neck. 'Thank you.'

Will had a maturity and competence far beyond his young years, and Hannibal was truly so proud of him. 'Happy Anniversary, my love.' Hannibal kissed Will's ring finger, holding his hand against his cheek.

That week, they drove down to San Diego with Dad and Louella, taking in the sights. Will said he was considering applying for a master's in either animal behaviour or child psychology. Hannibal thought he would make an excellent counsellor and Will liked the idea of working with children.

When they came back, it was time to say goodbye to California finally, and they started to pack up for their move back to Louisiana. Hannibal had handed in his notice three months prior to the hospital and already taken his old post back to start in two months. Will had given his notice at the rescue shelter and trained a first-year college student to take over his job.

Two nights before they were due to leave, Hannibal was finishing packing the bedroom, whilst Will was sealing boxes downstairs. He fondly bubble wrapped the special cufflinks and watch boxes Will had made for him and given at Christmas. He put them in the BEDROOM FRAGILE box and ran brown tape over the top.

'How do we have sooo much stuff?' Will was yelling. 'It was a lot easier moving in than moving out.'

Hannibal came down carrying the box and put it in the lounge by the side with all the other boxes of varying sizes. The sports equipment was stacked in the corner, threatening to spill over; ski-sets, water-skis, bikes, snow sledges, tennis rackets. He felt a pang of sadness as he looked around at the five years' worth of life in the hallway.

Max and Lady were in the kitchen, playing, Hannibal could hear their paws tapping, Lady with her small happy yips and Max with his woofy barks.

Will came out of the office holding Hannibal's sketchbook in his hand.

'Do you want me to grow a beard?' Will looked amused, and Hannibal caught his eye, breath stilling in shock.

Will flicked through to the back pages. 'I'm not sure I'll be able to grow one. Is this what you imagine I'd look like if I did?' He peered at the drawings. 'I look older…'

His expression did not look bothered by the discovery of the sketches, but Hannibal abruptly felt exposed. Like he had been caught doing something very bad. He had unconsciously drawn *Will*? He wasn't sure if he could remember doing the sketches.

'Hannibal?' Will's brow furrowed. 'What's wrong? You need more boxes?'

Hannibal saw Lady chase Max around the dining table through the archway, Will standing in the corridor.

He felt like he was on a precipice and didn't know which way he was going to fall.

Should he *tell* Will?

The moment stretched to the point of uncomfortable, and Will's gaze faltered.

Snapping back, Hannibal smiled, walking up to his husband, and looking down at the drawing. 'Actually, I was sketching a painting, but maybe I am incapable of drawing male figures without your face.'

He tipped Will's chin up. 'You don't ever need to grow a beard and hide your beautiful face.' He cupped his jaw, capturing his lips in a tender kiss.

‘We’re supposed to be packing,’ Will’s words muffled by Hannibal’s mouth.

‘I know,’ Hannibal purred. ‘Stop distracting me then.’

He looped his arms around Will, aligning his body against his. ‘Did I tell you I loved you today?’

The laugh that came out of Will was pure joy. ‘No.’

‘I’m terrible.’ Hannibal nipped at his throat. ‘What a neglectful husband I have been.’

‘Awful,’ Will said merrily, winding his arms around Hannibal’s neck. ‘Good thing I know you love me.’

‘All I am *is* love for you. My reason for existing.’

‘Bunch of saps, aren’t we?’

‘Yes. Let’s strive to be as sap-full as we can on a daily basis.’ He kissed Will on the forehead.

‘Challenge accepted.’ Will scrunched his face and kissed his nose.

That night as Will slept, his warm weight laying across Hannibal’s chest, he played back the moment Will had come out with the sketchbook.

He ran through the various outcomes if he told Will.

One, Will would think he was having a breakdown and get alarmed. After all, who would believe such an unbelievable story?

Two, he would believe Hannibal was a time traveller but immediately think he was sloppy seconds, the understudy, Hannibal’s wish fulfilment because he hadn’t been able to be with *Will*. He would question all aspects of their relationship and think Hannibal was with him because he couldn’t be with *Will*.

And that wouldn’t be true at all.

When he had found Will, Hannibal knew it was another version of him but wanted to make sure that he was okay and provide him with love and support, wanting to gain his trust and remain in his life. He knew there might be a possibility that Will might be attracted to him when he got older, but Hannibal never deliberately tried to steer their relationship in that direction.

He could never have foreseen that Will would want him at such a young age and that they would fall in love the way they had. He had been ever so mindful and careful to balance Will’s needs and happiness with his own conflicting emotions and making sure he didn’t take advantage of his young love.

Their beautiful romance unravelled like a ribbon, their passion for each other, the intense love they shared. The constant need to be together, marriage. That was all because of Will. His

Will. This Will, and because of who they *both* were in *this* timeline.

Hannibal had never had a physical or romantic relationship with *Will*. The love he had for *Will, his first beloved,* was raw and unfulfilled, undefined. *Will* had made him realise that he was capable of love and that he was willing to open himself to it.

But.

They never got a chance to explore their relationship.

And Hannibal never ever compared the two Will's.

Ever.

He knew them in entirely different ways, but how to explain that?

Three, he would believe they were both dead, and this was the afterlife.

All these outcomes left Hannibal with a sour taste. No. The truth was his cross to bear, why unburden himself only to burden Will with something that neither was able to do anything about?

If he or Will met another ghost from the past, the short-term anxiety was preferable to the confusion and worry that would rest on Will's mind forever.

Hannibal knew that if he woke again, he would always seek Will out. All versions of Will would be kinder, and a better person than he.

Unfortunately, Hannibal wasn't sure he had such faith in his *past-self* if it was the other way around. *That* version could only truly *know* if he experienced the pivotal moment that encompassed the possibility and opportunity of *them.* Be almost able to taste it when *Will* finally accepted *them*- for it to be cruelly snatched away and left holding *Will's* lifeless body in his arms. He would have to suffer the loss of his beloved to be able to grasp what *Will* truly meant. How else would he understand?

If *Will* had woken up in another timeline, alternate universe, would he have the confidence in Hannibal not to be a bastard and approach him? After all, *Will* knew *that* Hannibal better than anyone, they were bound to one another, but would any version of his *past-self* not suffering *Will's* loss, be receptive to *Will Graham* and fall in love the way *Will* needed?

That *Will* would need Hannibal to come to him rather than the other way around.

On moving day, with arms twined around each other, they stood outside and took one last look at the house. Remembering their first years of marriage and all the memories they had created.

Will tilted his face up to kiss him. 'I loved it here, but I will love it anywhere as long as we are together.'

‘Did I tell you that you are my everything?’ Hannibal sunk the words into Will’s skin, cherishing the feel of the arms around him.

‘My everything.’ Will whispered back.

‘I will always take care of you until my last breath in this world and lifetimes beyond. I will always find you. Will you come and find me too?’

The thought of being without his Will was enough to bring him to his knees and dig his own grave.

Will looked at him with an intense and serious gaze, his blue eyes flaming with white heat. ‘I will *always* come to find you. Promise. Always. Death will not do us part. Not if I have anything to do with it.’

Hannibal wished that to be true. He stared down at the small beautiful and determined face he would never tire from seeing, touching, and kissing. Fingers gently grazing the soft skin of Will’s cheek, he pressed their lips together and breathed him in.

Will laughed quietly and gave him a flurry of kisses before moving back. ‘I love you.’

He gestured for Max and Lady to come bounding towards him and opened the car door as he helped them clamber inside. Hannibal watched them with a soft-hearted smile.

They broke up the journey to Louisiana over ten days, using Will’s car as they had sent Hannibal’s with the moving service. They stopped off at dog-friendly hotels, making their way across the country, taking in the sights along the way. A mini holiday before they settled back into their old home.

When they got back, Will got out and stretched his legs. He pecked Hannibal on the cheek and announced he was taking the dogs for a walk. Hannibal finished unloading the car, his senses alerting him that he was being watched. He looked across the street to see the elderly, Mrs Gossamer wave at him. He crossed over and chatted to her.

Will returned ten minutes later and joined in the conversation, snaking an arm around Hannibal’s waist. Hannibal slung his arm around Will’s shoulder, and kissed the side of his head, nestling his body close. Mrs Gossamer looked delighted at them moving back permanently. Max and Lady chasing each other on her lawn.

‘We must have you over for dinner once we have settled back,’ Hannibal told her, and she said she would make a pecan pie for dessert.

That evening, the four of them were tired, and had an early dinner, with an early bedtime. The dogs were allowed on the bed as a special treat, and they all sprawled on the king-size mattress dozing.

Just before midnight, Hannibal got up with a start and realised he hadn’t secured the doors downstairs and slipped out of bed carefully.

As he came down, immediate awareness of another raced through him—his nose scenting a new fragrance.

Gritting his teeth, he silently stepped off the stairs. His fists curled, as he *felt* a presence.

Heard a sound.

Drawing himself up to his full height, alert and ready, he entered the kitchen.

And a voice said, ‘hello, Hannibal.’

Chapter End Notes

Next time on 'My Everything':: ...

I wanted to take a moment to say how much I have appreciated anyone taking the time to comment, give me a kudos, subscribed, bookmarked this series! I know most of you are silent readers and I respect that, just to say that I am aware of all of you. Thank you!

I am new to this fandom, and didn't how I would be received BUT I wanted to share this story with you.

It's been tough these last few months and if you have lost anyone this year, Covid-19 related or otherwise, I am sorry for your loss. I know how hard it is and social distancing funerals SUCK!
This fandom has been a wonderful distraction for me and is so blessed with such wonderful writers!

If at any point, this fic has made you smile, feel good, emotional then frankly I've done my job as a writer :o) <3

I have a holiday outtake from this chapter that I will post next week. Completely angst free and will tag# everything is beautiful nothing hurts!

The final Chapter 10 will be uploaded new years-ish.

Thank you again! *sniffle*

Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

The End

Chapter Notes

I'm *kinda* scared. But here goes…buckle up!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal inhaled sharply at the sight before him. Breathless for a moment like he had been punched. The kitchen light was on, and the man was sitting on the breakfast stool, reading a newspaper, looking unconcerned.

Hannibal's bare toes curled on the floor, fingers clenching back into fists again. He took a deep breath and smoothly lifted a large knife from the knife block, feeling the weight in his hand.

'What are you doing here?' He was ready for a fight if that's what needed to happen. Tense, taut muscles prepared to move, spring forward.

'You have a lovely home,' the man said, looking up at him.

Hannibal ignored the compliment. 'You broke into my house.'

'I merely let myself in.'

'How are you here?'

'Same as you, I suppose.'

He was in his late forties, early fifties perhaps. Hannibal had almost forgotten what he had looked like at that age now. The faded scar on his face, dark blond hair streaked with silver, fiery ember eyes, expression haughty and glacial. Handsome. The presence of a lion. Imposing. He had said goodbye to his past self a long time ago, and it was confronting to acknowledge who he had once been.

Which version of himself was this?

'What's the last thing you remember?' Hannibal's tone was apprehensive.

‘The same as you.’ The man said again.

‘And *what* was that?’

‘The night we died on the beach, but obviously with none of the injuries we sustained.’

Hannibal breathed slightly easier, even though his teeth were still on edge. ‘What do you want?’

‘Curiosity more than anything. Congratulations on the wedding.’ He gestured towards the framed photo taken in Las Vegas. ‘He is beautiful. And you have lovely dogs. Two is quite restrained.’

Hannibal eyed him suspiciously. ‘You’ve been watching the house.’

‘Yes.’

‘If you are here to hurt us, if you go near Will, I will kill you,’ Hannibal spat out. His voice low and harsh.

Dark eyes captured his, unsmiling. ‘We both know which one of us is more dangerous.’

‘*I am*.’ Hannibal struck back. He would kill himself again if he had to, to protect his life with Will. Do anything.

Will’s love had made him stronger.

He flexed the knife in his hand, imagining the cool steel slicing through the air, catching skin and spraying blood. Walking slowly towards the counter, he kept a firm grip on the handle.

His past regarded him thoughtfully, and Hannibal tried to work out what he was thinking, feeling a stab of panic. ‘Don’t even think about approaching Will or his father. We have a happy life. Don’t—'

‘Happy?’ The man gave a small, fond smile. ‘The word “happy” seems inadequate for what you two are. I have never seen a couple so in love. Magnificent works of art and poetry. Love sonnets personified.’ He chuckled, sounding almost affectionate. ‘I have no wish to destroy your life. You are like my children.’

‘You shouldn’t have children.’ Hannibal threw back, recalling Abigail.

‘And you should?’

‘Yes,’ Hannibal replied. ‘One day, when Will is older. We both want children. We’ve talked about it.’ He remembered what he, they, had said to *Will*. *“You know better than to breed. Can't pass on those terrible traits you fear the most.”* He felt a swoop of shame at having said that. There was nothing wrong with Will’s biology.

‘You would make wonderful parents.’ The praise seemed genuine, eyes crinkling in the corners. ‘You have a loving and “*happy*” home.’

His past indicated to Hannibal's wedding band. 'How long have you been married?'

'Five years.'

He hummed, bowing his head.

'And in a relationship?'

'Seven years.'

A slight raise of eyebrows.

'Don't *judge* me.' Hannibal's eyes narrowed.

'I'm not,' came a hasty reply. 'Far be it from me to judge you.' A pause. 'I suppose he has you wrapped around his finger as they say.'

'Yes,' Hannibal said, a sentimental curve lifting his lips.

'As it should be.' The man sighed. 'He is the centre of your universe, and you care about him as an individual and not an extension of yourself.'

'Will is…extraordinary.' Hannibal didn't have to explain as it was *obvious*, to *himself*.

'He is.' His past took on a faraway look for a moment as if transported elsewhere.

'I thought I would never be in a committed and loving relationship, but he has taught me how.'

'Dr Bloom would be most exasperated. You are continuing to defy all tick boxes and checklists. *What* are you?'

'I am what I am, and he loves me.'

'Does he know what you are capable of?'

Hannibal didn't answer which was answer enough.

'Don't worry. I'll keep your secret safe.'

'It's not a secret. I'm not that man anymore. I don't need it. All that matters is Will. He is enough.'

Hannibal wondered fleetingly if his past would mock him for being a *proper* family man with responsibilities. A husband, dogs and literally a house with a white picket fence, but he knew deep down, it is what *he* craved too. However, there were no signs of that. If there had been Hannibal would elbow him in the face.

He stepped back into the hall for a few seconds, listening for any movement and noise from upstairs. Nothing. He came back into the kitchen and softly closed the door.

‘Do you need money?’ He asked, his hackles still raised but sitting on the stool opposite, setting the knife down within reach.

‘No, I don’t. I’ve made some investments, placed bets. Done quite nicely. Helps to have a good memory.’

Hannibal watched him.

‘You can keep the inheritance, the family, your Will, our name…’ he trailed off. ‘You have left me with our history, and a chance to start again. I can drop the shackles of the past it would seem.’

‘How long have you been here?’

‘Fourteen months.’

‘Over a year?’ Hannibal’s brows creased. ‘Where did you wake up?’

‘The apartment in Maryland, when I, or we were at John Hopkins. But obviously, I am not the age I was originally, so I knew something was… well. I assume you have never studied at John Hopkins. You have changed your timeline.’

‘I didn’t go, no. I never met Donald Sutcliffe.’

They both looked at each other, trying to understand what was happening.

‘You woke up the same age as when we died…’ Hannibal said slowly. ‘In May, last year?’

‘Yes. Did something significant happen then?’

Hannibal took a deep breath, scanning back. ‘Will was in hospital. He had encephalitis. He crashed for a moment, and they had to restart his heart, and I blacked out. Apparently, I gave everyone quite a scare.’ He tried to catch his train of thought quickly before it flew away. ‘If I stopped breathing, and my heart stopped, did that make you wake up?’ He leaned forward. ‘What was the date?’

‘May 30th.’

‘That’s the same day…’

‘Astonishing.’

‘I’ve been here for nearly ten years.’

‘I can tell. You are younger both in mind and spirit.’

Was that a jab? Accusing him of going soft? Smug bastard. ‘It’s not regression,’ Hannibal snapped. ‘It’s adapting.’

‘I’ll reiterate, I pass no judgement, merely stating a fact. Your accent, your use of language, your mannerisms. You have become properly Americanised. Young Will’s influence no doubt.’ The hardness of his face softened only when he smiled as he was doing now.

‘So, if you’re awake then…Where is…*your* Will?’ Hannibal asked, watching his past’s expression flicker with emotion.

The man dipped his head, eyes down on the counter before looking back up. ‘I don’t know. I didn’t know which Will I would find, but I did look for him at the university. Of course, Will Graham of this timeline is not studying forensics.’

‘No, Will isn’t.’ Hannibal confirmed, hesitating before going on. ‘A few months ago… I thought I saw someone who looked like *Will*, your *Will* at Mardi Gras.’

His past tilted his head, listening keenly, hungry for information. ‘That confirms that he is present…somewhere. I knew it. I could feel it.’ He breathed out as if a huge weight had lifted from him. ‘But he has not been in touch?’

Hannibal shook his head. ‘He hasn’t approached us. I mean, I didn’t think he was here, in this timeline. I didn’t think it was possible as Will and I are already here but seeing you... Yes, it must have been him then. I thought he was a figment of my imagination.’

‘He probably woke up wherever he was in the original timeline but like me, not of the correct age.’

Hannibal felt a burst of happiness at the notion of *Will* being alive but at once felt a flash of anxiety. ‘Please, don’t harm him,’ he couldn’t help but say.

His past twisted his lip, snarling. ‘Do you think of me as a savage? You are the more evolved version because you have been here longer? An expert on all things Will Graham?’ The tone was cool but barbed, making Hannibal bristle.

‘You haven’t spent time with him, not like me.’

‘Might I remind you that your *Will* and my Will are different.’

‘Now, yes, but I met him when he was a young boy. They were the same up to that point. I know his essence.’

His past seemed affronted at the implication that he wouldn’t know how to care for *Will* properly as he deserved. ‘I have no desire to harm him. We both remember what we went through that night.’

Hannibal felt his jaw pulse. Yes, that memory was still painful after all this time.

‘I will *not* harm him.’ The man repeated. ‘Concentrate on your own Will. Do not concern yourself with mine.’

Hannibal felt a flash of irritation. ‘I’ve had a long time to think about it.’

‘Yet our thoughts are the same, I dare say.’

‘Then, you love him.’

‘Of course, I do.’

‘But at the cost of you or him?’

‘Neither. But if there had to be, then at the cost of me, I should think.’

‘It’s different,’ Hannibal said. ‘When you’re with him. Will. I get flashbacks. Have you had them?’

‘Flashbacks no. However, I have had plenty of time to process my feelings. Dying certainly illuminates what’s important.’

‘It will happen. I imagined I was incapable of it, but I felt guilt and regret. I, we, spent so long denying what he meant to us. Playing with him, torturing him. It all happened too late. We really hurt him.’

‘Hindsight is twenty twenty...But he *hurt* us too,’ his past said plainly.

‘Only because he had to.’ Hannibal felt uncontrollably protective of both Will’s. His past needed to recognise that. Will must not be harmed. Must not be hurt. ‘What does a cornered wounded animal do? Fight back. You can try and say you were helping him shed his skin and embrace his *“true nature”*, but we manipulated him, pushed him. That didn’t come naturally to him. He said he didn’t delight he tolerated. Will is beautiful and kind. He has a big heart. Please don’t ink him with darkness and try and lure him that way again. Please, please do not hurt him. He thrives when he is loved and happy and filled with light.’

‘I *know* this.’ The man’s voice was low and cautionary—a warning. ‘I do *not* have to be told. That is *not* all I am.’ He stretched his fingers as did Hannibal and their eyes met, clashing, battling until their expressions relaxed, and they understood each other.

‘Trust that I haven’t spent all this time looking for him, just to hurt him. I know what he means to me. *Believe me*, you know this. We *are* the same.’

Hannibal huffed a breath, relenting. He couldn’t lie to himself, and their thoughts up to that point *were* the same before they split.

‘Although you should never underestimate him. He is far more powerful than us. He is both a righteous and fierce predator. We’ve seen him in action.’

Hannibal contemplated. ‘I know. He can be very dangerous …But accepting that part of himself finally, he was afraid of becoming like us so…’

‘He preferred life to choose for him at that moment, which it did.’

‘You know the most interesting thing about us, is loving Will Graham. Without him, we’re just flamboyant, lonely serial killers who eat humans.’

‘Quaint way of putting it.’ The man said with a measure of distaste. ‘Isn’t it a bizarre turn of events that you and your Will are the reality in this world and me and *Will* are the “ghosts”?’

Hannibal stayed silent.

‘It’s liberating. We can choose to be whoever we want to be.’ It was like his past was talking to himself.

‘So, you've been looking for him all this time?’ His Will had been easy enough to find, but *Will*, not so much.

‘I have been, yes and will continue.’ The man clasped his hands together. ‘I thought to ask you in case, but you are as ignorant as me.’

‘He would go somewhere similar, but far from here. Cold weather, seclusion, water, lakes…’

‘Where he could tinker with his engines and boats and wade into the quiet of the stream, yes. I have a few more places in mind.’

‘Do you have everything you need?’ Hannibal asked.

‘I do.’ His past got up and poured himself a glass of water. He moved with confidence around the kitchen like it was his own. An arrogance behind his movements. He took a few sips and cleared his throat. ‘However, I do miss high-speed internet and smartphones.’

‘You’ll get used to it.’

‘Yes. I suppose I shall.’

A momentary lull and then Hannibal said, ‘there are…other “ghosts” from our life.’

His past considered before speaking. ‘Matthew Brown being one?’

‘Yes,’ Hannibal said frowning. ‘He—'

‘Was met with an unfortunate accident a few days after his release I read.’

Hannibal started. He had asked to see the police report and read the injuries listed. ‘Broken spine and neck with skull damage. They said he fell off the bridge after drinking too much.’

‘Tragic.’

A look of understanding passed between them, their lips twitching slightly in unison.

His past looked around the kitchen before drawing himself tall. ‘I’ll be on my way.’

He reached into his pocket and pushed a small card the size of a business card towards Hannibal with a P.O Box address. It was uncanny seeing his handwriting but not written by his hand.

‘I’m sure this world is big enough for the four of us,’ Hannibal said tentatively.

He was given an amused look.

‘Meaning when I find my Will, you do not want us making ourselves known to your *Will*.’ His past knew him well. ‘Do not worry. We will preserve his innocence. He does not need to know.’

‘Thank you,’ Hannibal said simply.

‘You will take care,’ the man said. ‘You will not see me again, unless…’

Hannibal stood up. ‘Good luck. Please be happy. And don’t be alone.’

‘I won’t.’

‘You *will* find him, and when you do, please thank him for me. For my life.’

‘I will.’

He put a hand on Hannibal’s shoulder before leaning in and pressing a light kiss on his forehead and patting his cheek. It felt fatherly. He quietly opened the kitchen door and turned to look at Hannibal for the last time before striding out of the main entrance.

Hannibal stood in the door frame as his past disappeared back into the shadows.

Letting out a long breath, his shoulders sagged as the tension dissipated. He secured the doors and checked all the windows before going back upstairs.

He slipped into bed, and gently slid his arms under Will, cuddling him close, burying his face in the soft chocolate curls. Max and Lady raised their heads looking slightly annoyed but then back down to soft snores, tails thumping rhythmically before going still.

Will shifted, face tilting upwards, lips silently seeking contact. Hannibal at once answered with a soft kiss, reassuring Will of his presence. ‘Wheredja’go?’

‘Just locking up, my love. I’m here.’ Hannibal’s arms held his darling tighter, his palm resting over Will’s ear as Will nestled into the warmth of his neck.

He stared up into the darkness, feeling strangely protected and safer in this world. Two distant but fierce parental figures watching over him and Will.

The four of them *here*.

Together.

Hannibal smiled.

Shore

Hannibal held onto Will as he dragged them both to shore. The adrenalin from mere moments ago, ending swiftly, leaving his legs weak and shaky and very aware of his open wounds.

The moon cast its silvery glow, an eerie, ghostly light edging everything in blacks and greys, the night air unforgiving. His sodden body was freezing, the cold permeating into his very bones as if his blood had turned into ice.

He lurched onto the stony pebbled beach, pulling Will's heavy body with him. Gasping, he collapsed on his front trying to expel the water he had inhaled, coughing, struggling to catch his breath.

'Will…' he rasped. His ice-cold fingers shaking and curling as he shook Will. 'Wake up. We have to go.'

He got on his knees, the hard rocks beneath digging into him.

Will wasn't moving. He wasn't making any sound.

Hannibal felt a black cloud start to tremble and evaporated it.

'Will….' he said again. 'Wake up.'

He took several deep breaths and manoeuvred Will's body, so he was lying flat on his back, arms down by his side. He was drenched and slippery with blood, and had multiple injuries, bleeding profusely, but the most important thing was…

He shook Will's shoulder for a response. There was none.

Hannibal tilted his head back and looked and listened for breaths. There was none.

Rise and fall of his chest. There was none.

Heart careening off the rails, hurtling into the abyss, spinning, beating so rapidly Hannibal felt lightheaded. A scream swirled in his throat, and he swallowed hard, forcing it down.

He took another deep breath, clearing his mind. Panic wasn't going to help.

'Stay with me, Will.'

"Where else am I going to go?"

He began CPR. Chest compressions. Rescue breaths.

It's going to be fine. Will would wake up. It's fine.

On and on.

His body shivered as he pressed down hard on Will's chest.

Come on. Come on.

His hands were tired and fumbling, and he knew he was hypothermic, going into shock. The blood seeping out of his wounds, but he didn't stop.

On and on.

Come on, Will. Wake up. It's fine. Wake up.

But Will remained…still.

Hannibal's eyes blurred...*what…what was happening?*

Will? Will?

'Will? Wake up!'

He breathed into the cold, cold mouth, slippery with blood and water, his fists thumping hard —to jumpstart Will's heart.

'Come on. Fight. Wake up!'

He started again. The same cycle. Rescue breaths, compressions.

'Can you hear me? I'm here. You have to wake up, and we can go…just go…' He was panting with exertion.

Will…

His eyes in tear-filled horror; abject despair. His chest hurt; the swell of pain was intolerable. This couldn't be their ending. Not like this.

Rage flooded his body. 'Get up!' he roared. 'Open your eyes! Don't you dare give up!'

He pressed down hard and felt Will's ribs crack.

He began again.

And again.

And again.

Losing track of time…

'Will…' He sat back on his knees, his lungs seizing. He couldn't breathe. Everything hurt, the pain was unbearable. Grief was ripping him open, instant, and violent. The fabric of his very being torn apart.

What… He clutched his heart, confused. *Will had been in his arms, right there on the top…* What had happened? Just rewind, they could do this again. It didn't make sense.

"I want you to help me, Dr. Lecter."

Will was dead. He had died.

Hannibal choked in horror.

Will was dead.

Logically he knew that. *He knew.* Will had catastrophic injuries. So many broken bones. Hannibal was sure he was underneath Will when they had fallen…. when had they turned? Had he been holding Will when he had taken his last breath? Will must have slammed into the rocks, dying instantly.

Hannibal couldn't form any words, only voiceless screams. He came forward, picking up Will's head. He was so cold.

"You're supposed to be my paddle."

'I waited for you! For so long! I waited. I imagined what our life would be. All the things we would do together, but all that matters is you. All I want is you. You are enough.' He breathed heavily, trying to straighten the horrifying thoughts in his head.

'Will!' he screamed, the sound shrieking and echoing into the night. He was holding Will's limp, cold body in his arms and rocking him back and forth. Hannibal's face wet, eyes filled with tears. *'Will!'* Desperate screams. Maybe if he screamed enough, Will would wake up.

He was crying.

He hadn't cried in decades. Not properly. Not tears running down his face, falling, wet. Tears. Not since Misha.

He couldn't stop the animalistic sounds of deep sorrow—moans of complete anguish.

Had it really been just a few hours? Will holding his drink, looking beautiful and determined, resigned. What had he been thinking?

A low wail broke out, punctured, and wounded from inside. Was he giving up too quickly?

'Will?' He frantically tried to hear for anything. Feel anything; hands splayed over Will's chest again. 'I let you see me again. Is this your final way of rejecting me and exacting revenge? You got the last word, beloved.'

Nothing.

He was trembling badly, teeth rattling, as he held Will tightly in his arms.

Time passed.

The wind cold and cruel, whipping lashes on his frozen face and body, freezing as it settled inside him.

He felt as cold as Will.

"We're conjoined. Curious if either of us can survive separation."

The vicious waves hurtled against the cliff sides, pounding against the shore. Suicide wasn't the enemy, living without Will was. How could Hannibal exist in a world where there was no Will? There was no point in living if there was no *Will Graham*.

'Will?' He stared down at the wet curls, the long lashes, the full mouth. Beautiful Will. His sweet little face. He looked peaceful and bloody. 'Where have you gone? You can't leave me!' *His poor, broken, beautiful, dead Will.* His unrequited love lost forever—the opportunities lost forever.

Will had just quietly slipped away.

Hannibal rarely felt pain or fear, but now all he could feel was terror and what was ahead. Cavernous black nights yawning their great mouths into absolute nothingness.

"Intense fear will come in waves. The body can't stand it for long."

'There is nothing without you.'

"You're family, Will"

He was alone once again in this world. All by himself. Nothing and no one for him. Again. Utter hopelessness, and who would he be able to share the excruciating pain with? Who would understand him ever again? The hysterical arms of madness threatening to take over his mind. The unfathomable trauma so great, he doubted he would ever get over it.

His vision was hazy, and he had to make a choice quickly.

He *could* switch it all off. Lock Will in one of his mind palace rooms and walk away. Save himself. He could do that. Jack would find them soon and if Hannibal moved quickly, he could *still* get away. There was time. Will would become a part of his story. An image he indulged in every now and then but for the most part, Will could be forgotten…

Hannibal was very good at removing emotion after a discard, compartmentalising when required.

There was probably a version of him that would do just that…

"I'm alone in that darkness."

"You're not alone, Will. I'm standing right beside you."

But did *he* want to?

If he left now, the entire world would be his cage, and he could not fool himself in thinking that Will was outside somewhere, living a pedestrian life without him. He hadn't been able to hide from Will for years. He would *know* that Will was no longer *here*. The profound sadness at that single thought pierced like a shard of glass. He felt tired just thinking about surviving and not living.

He squeezed his eyes shut, and the infinite well of tears kept pouring, wetting his skin, his lips, dripping onto Will.

He had to decide.

‘I can’t leave you here, can I? Cold and alone... *Alone*...’ His voice broke, the words choking him. *He couldn’t leave Will alone.* He couldn’t walk away. His throat burned, and he couldn’t stop crying, the tears continually coursing down his face.

“We are just alike. You're as alone as I am. And we're both alone without each other.”

He took in a deep breath, still cradling Will in his arms.

‘We were supposed to be together. Finally. You haven’t played fair, Will. We didn’t get a chance….’ He swallowed the circle of tears, crowding his throat. ‘Wait for me, I’ll come to find you. Can you hear me? Wait, Will… Wait for me.’

In death, there was a possibility, no one knew anything for sure. Nothing was for certain. Hannibal was a risk-taking man; the universe was boundless, never-ending. Here it was final, there…who knew…

“I looked up at the night sky there. Orion above the horizon and, near it, Jupiter. I wondered if you could see it, too. I wondered if our stars were the same.’

‘I believe some of our stars will always be the same.”

He took a few calming breaths and carefully placed Will’s head down. Looking around, he crawled away for a moment and found a black, glassy, jagged piece of rock.

Grabbing it in one hand, he hurried back and picked Will’s head up gently, holding it tenderly against his chest. Pressing a kiss on Will’s forehead, he rested his face against Will’s cheek. His nose dipping low to take one final long breath.

He let the fear go.

Calm.

“I need you, Hannibal.”

Holding the sharp edge against his neck, he slashed his throat in one, single sleek motion all the way across. The blood immediately sprayed out, pouring in a thick stream. He took one last look at Will’s precious face and pulled him tight in his arms, one hand behind Will’s neck.

His lips found Will’s. And there they stayed.

Their first and last kiss in this world.

January 2001 - State of Maine.

Hannibal, as he still inwardly referred to himself, drove up the bumpy lane towards a large log cabin, in the literal middle of nowhere. It was late afternoon; the sun going down, twilight casting a shadow. A few lights bedded beneath the deep snow lit the way.

He switched the engine off and carefully got out of the car, the door closing with a soft thud.

The air was still and cold—a frozen lake in the distance behind a thick tree line. Trust Will to find such a place. Reminiscent of his home in Wolf Trap. Blanketed with snow.

"Sometimes, at night, I leave the lights on in my little house and walk across the flat fields. When I look back from a distance, the house is like a boat at sea. It's really the only time I feel safe."

Hannibal breathed slowly, tendrils of wispy cold breath swirling as he walked towards the door. The ground was slippery with hardened frost that crunched under his feet like broken glass.

He had no idea what kind of reception he would receive from Will, but at the bare minimum, he was going to forge a friendship and make sure that he stayed in Will's orbit. He had wasted too many years in the past denying his feelings for Will Graham. Deny deny deny. This life was going to be all about acceptance. Accept. Accept. Accept. No more games. And as far as romantic gestures went, he had topped surrendering to the authorities by killing himself. Was there a bigger sign of devotion? Yes, he knew exactly how he felt about Will… but had no idea how Will felt about him.

He was still a few metres away when the door opened, and a figure appeared bathed in light, sounds of dogs barking inside.

Hannibal's reaction was instant and visceral, a full-bodied sigh of relief.

Will.

At last.

Tears pricked his eyes. The last image of his love seared hot with pain, eager to be replaced.

His lips curved in a smile, and he stopped walking. 'Hello, Will.'

'Hannibal,' Will replied. He stepped forward, letting the door close slightly behind him. The porch light came on, detecting his presence. He was wearing a flannel shirt underneath a padded jacket and jeans with heavy snow boots.

Hannibal's heart soared, savouring the sight. The younger Will was beautiful, wholesome, like an Abercrombie Fitch model, but this man...

With his hard, lithe body, and soulful eyes. The celestial blue fire either basking you in warmth or burning you to ash.

This was his Will.

His beloved.

In his forties, with dark curly hair surrounding his delicate face. The short dark beard showcased his lips, further accenting the dark fringe of lashes and cobalt blue eyes. He had been so terrified that he would never see Will's lovely eyes open again. Will was like the sun chasing away the darkness. The howling wind and empty rooms vanishing at a glance.

How he had longed to see this face again, starved for this sight. He greedily devoured it.

"*An imago is an image of a loved one buried in the unconscious, carried with us all our lives."*

If he could be gifted with seeing this face every day before he slept and the first when he awoke; he would be the luckiest man ever to live.

Will watched him silently. He didn't have the pained look of stress that Hannibal had seen so often like he was carrying the weight of the world. No, it was more measured and calmer but *guarded* as if he expected a thorn filled path when it came to *them*.

Hannibal wondered how long it would take to kiss away that look permanently. Never to expect pain but complete gratification at Hannibal's touch and nothing else. He wished to see Will smile in abandon. Unburdened. Happy. He had a lovely smile, on the rare occasion Hannibal had been privileged enough to see it.

His eyes flickered to Will's forehead. 'No scars.'

Will touched his temple. 'I found a good plastic surgeon. I didn't want so many visible identifiers. I'm trying to blend in.'

Hannibal bit back a grin. It would do no good telling Will that he would never blend into any average setting with his looks and mind. Why did he want to be ordinary? He never would be.

A look flashed behind Will's eyes as he said, 'I didn't get rid of all of them.'

Hannibal glanced at his covered abdomen.

'Lest I forget,' Will said in a soft voice.

'Indeed,' Hannibal replied. 'Our scars journal a tapestry of a life lived. Lest we forget.'

He walked closer. 'Is it good to see me, Will?'

'Depends.' Will swallowed, his hands going into his pockets. 'Are you here to fuck up my life?'

Hannibal shook his head. ‘I assure you that I am not here to disrupt your life in an unpleasant way. That would serve no purpose, Will. I have no desire to harm you or cause you pain. I came to see if you are well. I’ve had over a year to think about what is most important, and here I am.’

“Where does the difference between the past and the future come from?”

“Mine? Before you, and after you. Yours? It’s all starting to blur.”

Will’s expression gentled. ‘Where are you living?’

Hannibal tilted his head east. ‘About two miles that way, but…’ He looked behind him. ‘Possibly a mile walk through the forest if you cut across.’

‘Yes, it is a mile walk. You bought the mansion.’

‘It needed an owner. It had been empty for eight years I am told.’ He smiled. ‘We are neighbours. No other house nearby until town, three miles away, which isn’t too far. Convenient.’

Hannibal couldn’t help but wonder if Will had chosen the location on purpose with the two of them in mind. Two houses isolated from everyone and everything else. ‘It looks like a nice place to retire.’

‘Bit early for that, isn’t it Hannibal?’

‘Not really, it’s time.’ He took in a cold, chilling breath. ‘Did you know I would come?’

Will sighed. ‘I didn’t know if you were here.’ He paused. ‘I knew that I must have died when I woke up in the wrong timeline but was hoping that you hadn’t.’ He pursed his lips and Hannibal felt the need to comfort him. ‘I didn’t know, Hannibal. I wasn’t sure I was even thinking. I wasn’t trying to kill you, more me. I acted on instinct...’

‘It’s okay, Will.’ Hannibal soothed. ‘It did cross my mind as we were falling. I assumed you didn’t know and were letting the universe decide and it did. Either way, it wants us here in this world now, so I’m not angry if that’s what you’re thinking. Don’t regret it. A zero-sum game, no? It’s in the past.’

‘I looked for you, just in case but found them instead. Have you seen them?’

‘Yes.’ Hannibal chuckled. ‘They are ecstatic and sickeningly in love,’ he said without a trace of envy.

‘How did they find each other?’

‘Hannibal found Will.’

‘They’re just kids,’ Will said fondly. ‘They’re happy.’

‘Deliriously. It seems they were meant to be. In every lifetime.’ His eyes gripped Will’s, the unsaid words heavy between them. ‘They have our names and family.’

‘As long as they are fine, it’s okay. They all seem good.’ Will moved closer, so they were within touching distance. ‘You’re here so, that means…’

‘Yes,’ Hannibal said easily.

‘Because of what I did?’ Will looked troubled.

‘No,’ Hannibal replied. ‘That’s not what killed me.’

‘Then what? When?’ Will asked, looking curious. ‘Later? Months? Years? I’m not sure how time works here.’

‘No,’ Hannibal said. ‘Just after.’ He wet his lips. ‘I pulled you ashore, but you were already dead. So, I killed myself.’

‘What?’ Will sputtered. ‘*Why?* Why didn’t you run?’

Hannibal stifled a sigh. Did Will not realise how much he was loved? Or he genuinely didn’t realise in what *way* Hannibal loved him?

‘Because…’ He swallowed as Will’s confused expression searched for answers. ‘There is no living if you are not living…’ *for me.*

Will’s eyes widened; his mouth open in shock as if he couldn’t understand why on earth Hannibal would do such a thing. After all, hadn’t Hannibal accused him of taking his life and freedom before leaving him to bleed on the kitchen floor? The irony wasn’t lost on Hannibal because, of course, he had given up his life and freedom for Will. All by himself.

Will’s eyes sparkled with moisture, and he crushed his bottom lip inwards. ‘I’m sorry, Hannibal...’ His voice cracked.

‘Will.’ Hannibal closed the gap between them. ‘Do not burden yourself and know that I willingly followed you in death. It was my choice. You must understand that and accept it is moving forward.’

Will’s eyes: blue swirls of glass tinted with grey and green specks, glistened. He was beautiful.

“ No greater love hath man than to lay down his life for a friend."

Hannibal felt tears smart again and inhaled another icy breath. ‘I quite like it here,’ he said. ‘A fresh start.’ He held out his hand for Will to take or shake, whatever he preferred. ‘Friends?’

Will’s right hand slipped into his and Hannibal pressed it tenderly, cherishing the feel of it. A rush of warmth flooding him. His other hand patted Will briefly on the back before his

fingers glided to his neck. Fingers curling into the soft hair on Will's nape, his thumb gently stroking the skin behind his ear.

'I'm sorry, Will,' he whispered.

Passing images of that night, whirled in front of his eyes.

Will not moving. Will dead in his arms.

Will's peaceful bloody face, so cold.

Dead.

Dead.

Dead.

The bottled-up grief overwhelmed him, breaking open his chest, raw and exposing. He was never going to get over that night. It would haunt him for the rest of his days.

He grasped Will, trying to bite back the sobs, hold back the pent-up misery that was tearing out of his very soul. His throat throbbed with the hot slip of tears as they ran down his face—a gut-wrenching howl threatening to escape.

Heartache.

He had left himself wide open to feel everything. All of it. He couldn't refuse it. *Will. Will. He was alive. Breathing. Here. Alive. This was all that mattered. Will was all that mattered.*

Hannibal moved his head a fraction, and his mouth pressed gently but firmly on Will's. Tasting the salt of tears on their lips. Resting a few heartbeats before he moved back, turning it into a kiss. He wanted to make his intentions clear from the outset.

Will's face was wet. From his tears and Hannibal's. Mingling together.

'Now, do you see?' Hannibal held Will's face with both hands, his palms cupping his jaw, his thumb wiping the soft wet skin under the lovely ethereal blue eyes. Will nodded, biting his lip.

The truth finally laid bare. No hiding from it, no running from it. Hannibal pulled him close, not wanting to let go and relishing the feel of Will Graham in his arms. Their foreheads touching, noses brushing together. His hands touched Hannibal's waist, as they breathed each other in.

An embrace.

Hannibal's innermost thoughts crept to the front of his mind. *Please, don't turn me away. Give us a chance. I promise it will be different. Our life will be beautiful. Please. Never let me go, Will. Please, don't ever let me go. Ever. Never. Ever.* There was no need to hide from

himself, and he didn't wish to hide from Will. He had let Will see him before and now wanted Will to see *everything*. They both needed to trust each other.

Will exhaled shakily, the warmth kissing Hannibal's lips again. 'I don't know what I'm doing.'

'Neither do I. We can be fools together.' Hannibal quirked a smile.

Will chuckled. 'We have a lot to talk about.'

'We do,' Hannibal said.

Will cleared his throat, leaning back. 'I caught a lake trout if you want to stay for dinner.'

'I would be delighted,' Hannibal said, falling in line with Will as they walked to the cabin. 'I can cook it while you pour the whiskey.'

'I have some chianti if you would prefer it.'

Hannibal didn't bother hiding his wide grin as the door opened and a fleet of barks turned into running paws.

'How many, Will?'

'Just four.' Will's lips curved and Hannibal felt a rush of pleasure at the wonderful sight and sound. He was *determined* to make it right this time.

'Restrained.' Hannibal teased.

He stepped into the warmth. A fire merrily underway; a large cosy sofa with a red fleece blanket, a wooden table, and chairs. Dogs were bounding towards him, eager to see their new guest.

Hannibal bent down to greet them all individually before straightening. Will's steady gaze held his, both unwilling to look away.

Hannibal had killed himself because he couldn't bear to be in a world without Will, Will had died, and the first thing he had done was look for Hannibal. There was no denying they loved each other, unequivocally; that was the ineffable truth.

His mind scrolled through images of what their life could be. This cabin, their warm, cosy, intimate sanctuary. Will kissing him. Will holding him. Will inside him. Will everywhere all over him.

They would split their time between the two houses. Belongings evenly distributed so they could sleep at either house – together- in one bed. The big house for hosting guests for dinners and parties, social events, and elaborate affairs. And Will's house…Will's house would be their home. Hannibal was a creature of bustling cities, but there could be weekend trips, and he was sure Will would be amenable to travel.

‘I’m glad you’re here,’ Will said softly, bringing Hannibal out of his reverie.

‘There is nowhere for me to be, other than by your side.’ He reached out to cup Will’s cheek.

Their younger counterparts were in a loving, committed relationship, had been for years—no reason their elder selves couldn’t do the same.

Now that they were free. To be whoever they wanted to be. Together.

To new beginnings, made more precious by another chance. He would be eternally grateful, and gladly spend the rest of his days, in every lifetime, worshipping at the altar of Will Graham.

His friend. His companion. The love of his life. His love.

His Will.

Chapter End Notes

Sooo? Ta da. *Eekk* I knew this would always be the ending as soon as I finished writing His Will. I initially wrote Shore to get into Hannibal’s mind, just for me, to imagine what he went through that night. I wasn’t planning on sharing it as there are so many amazing post-fall fics that have them coming out of the water.
However, this chapter was short, and I thought, seeing as I had written it, I may as well clean it up and post it. Possibly it helps you to understand Hannibal even more?

Did anyone guess that it was the older Hannibal in the kitchen?

I never say never, but for now, thank you so much for letting this story be a part of the fandom over the last few months. I have loved writing it. I have left all FOUR of them in a good place and you can imagine what the rest of their lives will be like. Filled with LOVE everyday.

If this fic inspires anyone in any shape or form, please let me know, and I have a request…

If you have read the story all the way through and think other’s may enjoy reading it, please recommend it and bookmark it, so it has a chance to be read by others.
I know when fics are complete, they go off the main pages and into literal archive history. This way it has a chance to carry on…

I know the major character death/underage tags put people off reading it, BUT I think the story is much more than that. It is about LOVE.

Thank you to everyone who has commented. I love chatting- seriously. The interaction is lovely, and it makes me happy to know that I have made someone smile!

Thank you and goodbye! xx

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!